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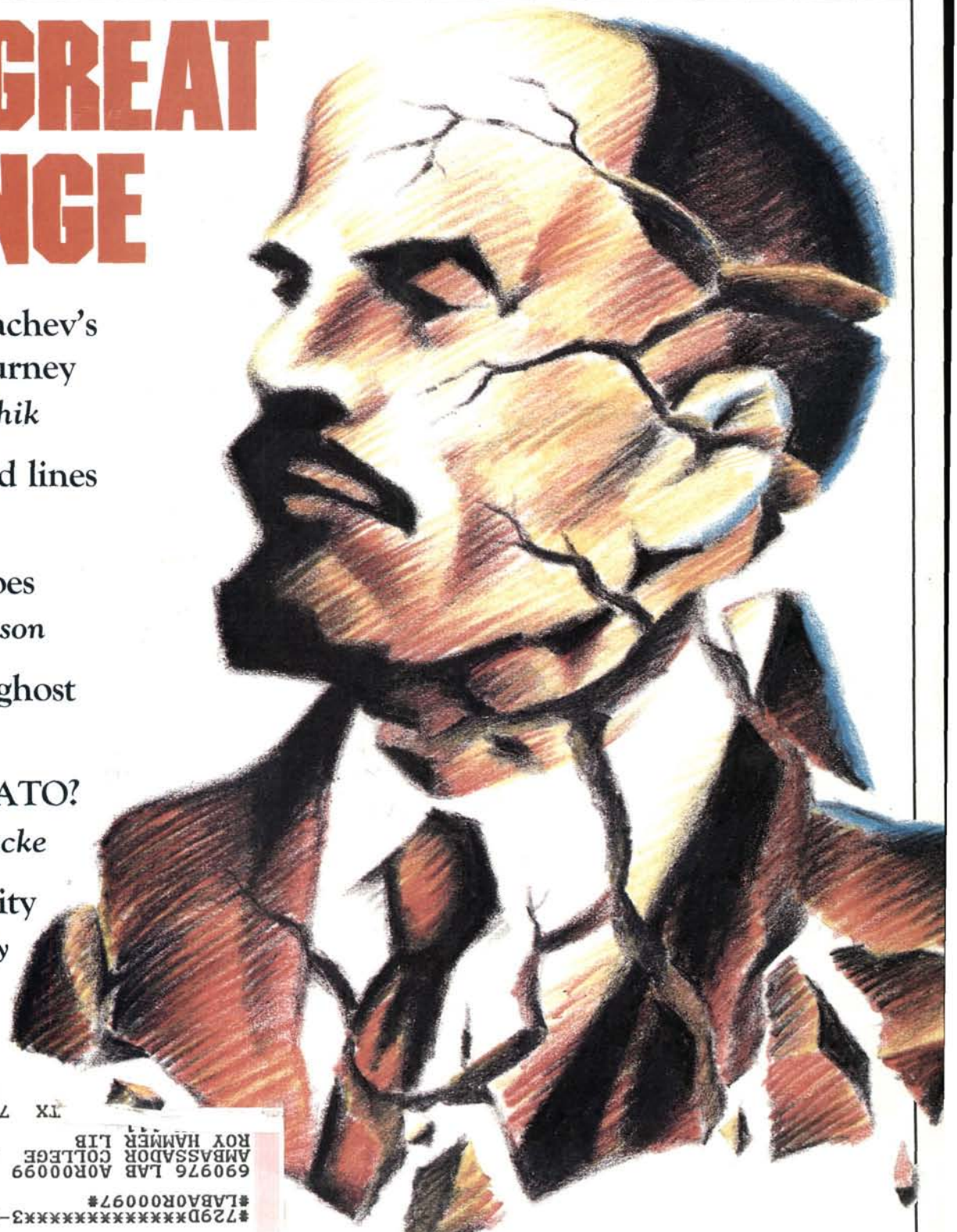

Mikhail Gorbachev's intellectual journey
Joshua Muravchik

Party line, food lines
James Blitz

Perestroika woes
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Great Lenin's ghost
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Who needs NATO?
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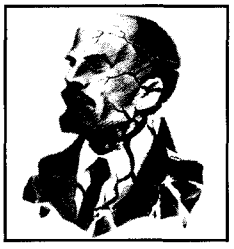

Cover by Allen Carroll for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 4, 14, 15, 17, 20, and 34.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Apparatchik city

Francis X. Clines reports in the *New York Times* that the young apparatchiks of the Soviet Communist Party are having no trouble adjusting to the new political order. Interviewing students at Moscow's Higher Party School the day after the Communist Party Central Committee renounced communism's monopoly on power, Clines found the students already spouting the new dogma.

The flexible ideologue is an ancient social type, dating back at least to England's famous Vicar of Bray, who happily became a Protestant or a Catholic depending on the whim of the monarch of the moment. "And this is law, I will maintain, / Unto my dying day, sir, / That whatsoever king shall reign, / I will be the Vicar of Bray, sir!" The deft Vicar of Bray kept his perks. But events moved too fast for the older Party hacks of East Germany, who now find themselves out of work or actually in prison for the salamis of six months ago.

Still, as wonderful as the collapse of communism is, it doesn't do to be too smug about the sudden end or rapid redirection of the careers of individual East bloc Communists. They were just playing the game by the rules they were given, as most of us do. Listening to all the gloating going on in Washington these days, you can't help wondering where some of the gloaters would be today if they had happened to be born in Hungary or Poland or the Soviet Union instead of the United States. How much difference is there between the motives that drive a young Russian to the Higher Party School and those that drive a young American to the training program at Salomon Brothers (described so vividly in the book *Liar's Poker*)? Is the life philosophy of members of the Party Central Committee so different from that of members of Congress?

In fact, it makes a pretty good parlor game. Which people in the Bush Administration and associated circles would be members of the Politburo and which, if any, would be dissidents? Which would be recently out of jail and heading for power in East Germany or Czechoslovakia, and which would be slipping out of power and heading for jail? The President himself, son of a senior regional apparatchik? James Baker? Can you see our Secretary of State freezing in Siberia for his belief in freedom and democracy? Richard Darman? Robert Mosbacher? The Doles? Well, now that you mention it, I can sort of imagine Bob Dole warming his bile over a coal fire for a couple of decades in a gawdforsaken place with a name like Yukst because of some unfortunate off-the-cuff remark to Stalin around 1949. But as for most of the rest of them, it's apparatchik city, as you-know-who might say.

I don't mean to suggest that the rest of us would be heroes, either. Even by Washington standards, the Bush crowd strikes me, at least, as especially characterized by ambition unhinged from principles of any sort, good or bad. But no doubt most of us would accommodate, not rebel. In his famous first speech as president of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel said that "all of us"—meaning all Czechs and Slovaks—shared responsibility for the "contaminated moral atmosphere" they inherited because "we had all become used to the totalitarian system and accepted it as an unchangeable fact and thus helped to perpetuate it." This is stirring but overmodest, coming from a man who spent years in jail for opposing the system. Nevertheless, a corollary of its central truth is that those of us fortunate enough never to have been put to the test would have flunked it, too. Vaclav Havels are scarce in any society.

I recently heard the following dialogue between an American left-wing intellectual and a reformed left-wing intellectual who is now a professional apostate, making a comfortable living from conservative foundations as a full-time disparager of his former views:

REFORMED LEFTY: If people like you were in power, people like me would be in prison.

LEFTY: If people like me were in power, people like you would still be on our side.

Lefty pretty clearly won that exchange. Some people's principles can't survive even a couple of Presidential elections, let alone decades of totalitarian suppression. Although intellectuals like to feel courageous, it requires no courage to support capitalism and American military power in the United States. However, it also requires no courage to oppose them. America is the land of pain-free dissent. So Lefty's principled fortitude also has never been put to the test.

This is not to say that everyone except the occasional Vaclav Havel is corrupt, a bad person. Good people, even admirable, heroic people, can't always see moral scandals that seem blindingly obvious in hindsight. Thomas Jefferson owned slaves. Generations of enlightened men—until just a couple of decades ago—saw nothing wrong with a society where opportunities for women were circumscribed in ways that seem unbelievable today. Women still don't have equal opportunity, of course. But almost no one denies that they're entitled to it. Perceptions have changed, quite rapidly.

George Bush—not an evil man, not a racist—opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Today we argue about its interpretation, but outright opposition to the basic principles of the Civil Rights Act would put you on the distant fringes of political acceptability—not in the White House.

My point is not that America before the Civil Rights Act or the liberation of women was in any way comparable to the Soviet Union before the abolition of Article Six (the Communist monopoly provision) or even afterward. My point is to reserve a bit of sympathy for people whose moral universe is suddenly turned upside down. It's easy to say they should have known better, acted better. It's harder to say for sure you would have known or acted better yourself.

America's basic values are not going to be found wanting and rejected overnight, as is happening in the Communist bloc. But who knows what perceptual revolution will come along—even in our own lifetimes, even in the next few years—that will make the views of even right-thinking people today seem shockingly debased? Maybe the anti-abortionists or animal rights extremists or back-to-the-earth environmentalists will persuade the vast majority. I doubt it, but who knows? Maybe it will be something not yet on the horizon. When it happens, most of us will flip as elegantly as those students at the Moscow Higher Party School, and hope no one notices.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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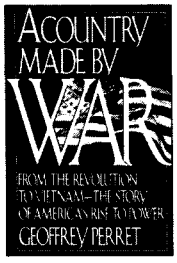

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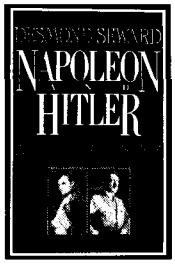

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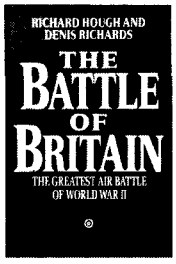

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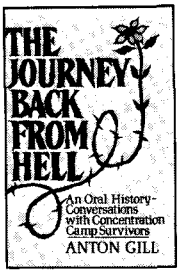

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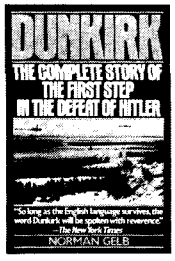

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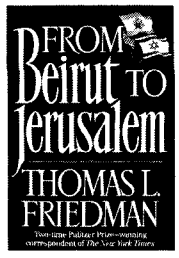

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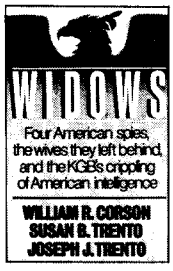
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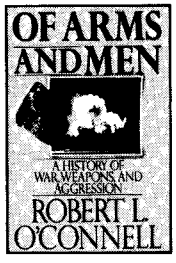

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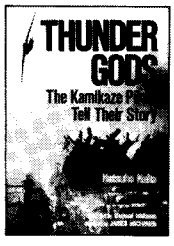

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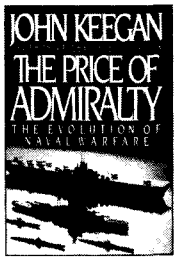

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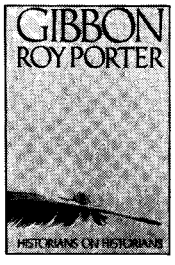

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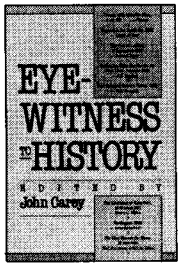

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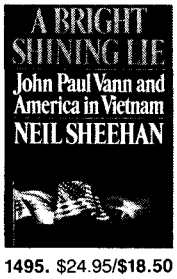

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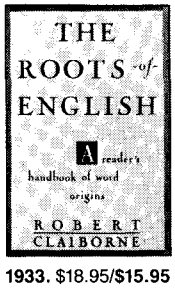

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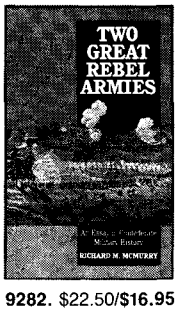

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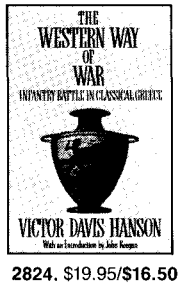

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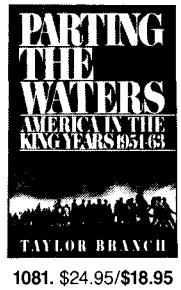

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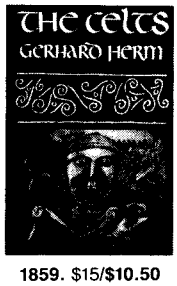

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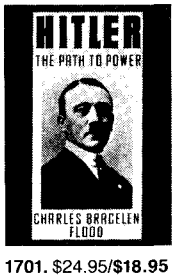

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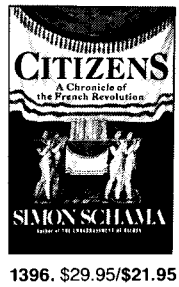

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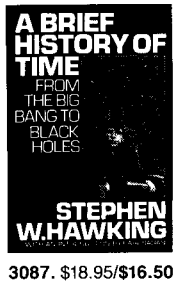

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The Senate's deep pockets

To the editors:

Fred Barnes has two complaints about self-financed Senate campaigns: "the perversion of the electoral process" and the remoteness of wealthy Senators from the problems of the middle and lower classes ("The Zillionaires Club," January 29). Neither objection is sound. It is good to have some successful capitalists in the Senate. It was invented for them.

It is also good that some wealthy Senators fund their own campaigns; somebody has to do it. Statewide campaigns cost millions now. It is refreshing when a candidate campaigns on his own dollars instead of on those of organized special interests. And as Barnes admits, "The surprising thing about self-financed campaigns is that voters don't mind."

Barnes's complaint that rich Senators are "out of touch with the anxieties of average Americans" is not compelling. Senatorial candidates who have spent a lifetime up to their ears in "average anxieties" may have no intention of attacking the causes of those anxieties. Intelligence, integrity, and empathy are the name of the game, and no socioeconomic class has a patent on those qualities.

MICHAEL A. GROSS
St. Louis, Missouri

To the editors:

Fred Barnes's strong implication that Senator Herb Kohl's money "bought" his Senate seat is an affront to Wisconsin voters. A successful and philanthropic businessman, Kohl was a longtime community activist and chaired the Democratic Party of Wisconsin for a period in the 1970s. Throughout the 1988 campaign, Kohl had a practical and sound message to sell. Without it, money or not, he would not be in Washington. When you consider that Bill Proxmire could win again and again without spending any money, you realize that expensive campaigns can actually be liabilities in Wisconsin.

MARC MAROTTA
MICHAEL ZUBRENSKY
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

To the editors:

During 1988 I served as budget director of the re-election committee of Democratic Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey. Early in the campaign the Senator made it very clear that under no circumstances would he use any personal funds as he had in 1982. During the final weeks of the campaign, opponent Pete Dawkins appeared to be closing in on Lautenberg's lead. Rather than use the Senator's own "shutout money," the committee secured a loan to purchase all remaining television time.

Also, Lautenberg's deep pockets did not succeed in "frightening off opponents," as Barnes claims. According to records on file with the Federal Election Commission, Dawkins raised and spent more than Senator Lautenberg during the 1988 contest.

THOMAS J. LEHNER
Alexandria, Virginia

Environmental hazard

To the editors:

In "All Rightniks" (by Daniel Gross and David P. Hamilton, January 22), I am described as a "left-turned-right-wing radical" and as someone who at a recent conservative conference "depicted environmentalists as proto-totalitarians . . . motivated by a hatred of humans as they are." This is a ludicrous misrepresentation on all counts. I am no more radical today than Martin Peretz and no more right-wing than Morton Kondracke, Charles Krauthammer, or Fred Barnes. The speech I gave at the conference ("From Red to Green") was not about environmentalists but about political radicals who had entered the environmental movement to further their agendas. What I said about their anti-humanism was occasioned by a quote: "The planet is about to break out into a fever and we are the disease." My comment was this: "Appearing as a new ideological wrinkle at first, this turns out to be the same old anti-humanism of the radical tradition, the very malevolence which has brought it to its present grief. For there is no 'true self' of mankind to be liberated, other than the historical self that we see manifest in its historical acts. . . . What motivates radicals is not compassion for the lost soul of mankind, but the hatred of human beings as they are. To the radical mind, whatever is is wrong."

DAVID HOROWITZ
Los Angeles, California

Royal rescue

To the editors:

In spite of large-scale murderous actions by Romanian Iron Guards and fascists, and of powerful Gestapo pressure, hundreds of thousands of Romanian Jews survived World War II ("The Israel Factor," January 22). Their rescue is perhaps the most massive in the history of the Holocaust. It is also the least known, for the historical record was systematically suppressed by the Communist regime.

In his book *Resisting the Storm*, Dr. Alexandre Safran, Romania's chief rabbi from 1939 to 1947, recounts in fascinating detail the decisive humanitarian and political role played by the late Queen Mother Elena, who by her actions saved the lives of tens of thousands of the 185,000 Jews deported to Transnistria from the eastern areas of the country. The Queen Mother and King Michael also helped to delay and then cancel plans to deport to Poland the entire remaining Jewish population of Romania.

In March 1989 Yad Vashem initiated the extensive documentation process that, in accordance with its rules, is the prerequisite to a formal decision on naming the Queen Mother a Righteous Gentile. This process is apparently well under way.

EMIL SIMIU
Rockville, Maryland

No shared bonds

To the editors:

In "Unholy Mass." (January 29), Joseph Nocera has the audacity to proclaim that citizens of Massachusetts were deeply offended by their state's association with Louisiana regarding their low bond rating. The situation is quite the contrary. It is the citizens of Louisiana who are "deeply offended" with the comparison.

This is another attempt by a pompous Northerner to perpetuate the inaccurate stereotype that Southern states are financially underdeveloped and culturally backward. With a menagerie of characters like the Duke, Howie Carr, the hack families on payroll, and Nocera himself, it is obvious why Louisianians boil and turn red (like our own mudbugs) with the comparison of our humble state to Massachusetts.

NEIL GIURINTANO
JOSEPH CONSTANS
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dramatic reversal

To the editors:

Your cover photo from the movie *Glory* (January 8 & 15), showing black soldiers charging the fort, is very striking, but it raises a question I've never heard raised before about black people: Are they all left-handed?

JOSEPH D. GOLDEN
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

The editors reply:

No, they are not. In fact, all of the soldiers in the photo are right-handed: we reversed the negative for layout purposes. Congratulations to all who noticed on their powers of observation.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 5, 1990

TONS FOR GUNS

President-watchers were baffled. The week the Soviet Communist Party broke with Leninism, President Bush was out touring military bases, trying to sell America on the Administration's sizable 1991 defense budget. In Nebraska, he donned a flight jacket and climbed into a B-1 bomber. At Fort Irwin, California, he watched war games from the sidelines. At Lawrence Livermore Labs he paid tribute to Edward Teller, cheerleader emeritus for the Strategic Defense Initiative, and goofily lauded the genius of the assembled scientists. ("Yours are the minds that are rarely at rest—sometimes blessed, sometimes burdened with a flow of ideas that simply won't quit. Maybe even when you're out fishing . . .")

To Bush's credit, he did seem to perceive the irony and try to defuse it, straining to adapt his rationale for big spending to a post-cold war world. For example, the research at Livermore, though ostensibly aimed at neutralizing thousands of incoming Soviet warheads, will also "serve the national interest in other areas—problems like economic competitiveness, education, energy, space exploration, waste cleanup, sound environmental practice." And whatever becomes of the Soviet Union, Bush said, America will need a strong military to protect shipping lanes and fight narco-terrorists.

Nice try, but this lame budgetary revisionism only compounds the confusion about the Bush Administration's worldview. When Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney introduced his budget, he framed it largely in cold war terms, insisting that a sharp shift in strategy would be premature. Further, an Administration directive issued in January warns military commanders of intense superpower tensions in the 1990s, asserting, remarkably, that "fundamental Soviet objectives in the Third World do not appear to have changed." The proposed $307 billion 1991 defense budget (2.1 percent less than 1990's in real terms, 1.8 percent more in nominal terms) isn't likely to get much respect on Capitol Hill until the Administration gets its story straight.

Cheney is partly right: the eternal passivity of the Soviet Union cannot be assumed. But at least two propositions seem safe: the Warsaw Pact is in an advanced stage of decomposition, and the Russian military will not for years be anything like the menace to Western health that it was even two years ago. A defense budget that embraced even these two facts would be substantially smaller than the Cheney budget.

A tiny but telling glimpse into the time warp Cheney inhabits is afforded by the dispute over the next generation of Lance missiles. The Lance "follow-on," you may recall, is the short-range missile West Germans refused to have on their soil last year. They didn't like, for one thing, the idea of lobbing nuclear warheads into East Germany. They're unlikely to have changed their minds on that one over the past few months. The other projected use of the Lance follow-on—planting mushroom clouds in Poland to halt an advancing Soviet army—has lost some of its luster, too, now that Poland is democratic and Soviet troops seem more inclined to head East than West.

Scrapping the new Lance would cut only $100 million out of the budget, but the sort of geriatric thinking it embodies is responsible for many billions of dollars in spending. Consider the deployment of a mobile land-based missile. Some reasonable people have long felt that an utterly invulnerable ground-based leg of the nuclear triad is not essential for deterrence (see "Triad, Schmiad" by Barry Blechman, TNR, February 6, 1989), and their hands have been strengthened by recent trends in Soviet military thinking. But you don't have to agree with them to fairly gag at the Administration's plans to develop *two different* mobile missiles—the ten-warhead MX, to be kept in a garrison and flushed onto the nation's railways during crises, and the single-warhead Midgetman, which would ride around on a truck. The Administration allots $2.8 billion next year for the rail-based MX and $200 million for Midgetman R&D. Here's a better idea: kill the rail-mobile MX, and spend around $800 million on the Midgetman, aiming to deploy it in the mid- to late 1990s, with the number deployed to depend on future trends in communism. Then pocket the rest. The virtues of the Midgetman are that its single warhead makes a less tempting target than the MX hydra, and that, unlike the MX, it has a basing mode that will make it truly invul-

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nerable to a pre-emptive strike for at least the next several decades, a fact that should short-circuit any vestigial enthusiasm for a hearty SDI program.

Speaking of which: Perhaps the most dishonest element in the defense budget is the $4.7 billion for Star Wars. The original idea behind SDI—that a space shield would make a nuclear exchange with the Soviets less likely—never had much intellectual integrity, and whatever popular appeal it possessed has been dissipating of late. This leaves the Administration suddenly stressing other uses, such as fending off missiles launched by "crazy states" or launched accidentally by the Soviets. Both of these rationales are dubious. But this hardly matters, for almost none of the $4.7 billion is going toward the relatively low-tech, ground-based defense system that such rationales, if valid, would warrant. While the Administration talks about Qaddafi, the geniuses at Lawrence Livermore are still trying to stave off the hulking Communist menace. Taking away $3 billion of the requested $4.7 billion might help clarify the Administration's priorities.

Among the reasons not to expect anything this dramatic from the Democrats is the habitual bipartisanship of Senator Sam Nunn. Nunn, among the first to endorse the latest logic for a missile defense, is unlikely to let SDI sustain severe damage in the Senate Armed Services Committee. Nunn also appears set to befriend that record-setting money eater, the B-2 Stealth bomber. The B-2 didn't come close to justifying its price tag even under cold war assumptions (see "Don't B-2 Sure," TNR, September 4, 1989). The post-cold war rationale for the plane is that its range and low radar profile make it ideal for remote surgical strikes—"doing a Libya," as they say. This is nonsense. Given the many other ways to "do" a Libya (such as the way Libya was "done"), no President would risk losing a $600 million plane loaded with sensitive technology. Granted, if the plane is utterly stealthy and utterly dependable (claims that few of even its biggest boosters make), then there is no such risk. But if the plane is that good, then the 13 B-2s already authorized are more than we'll ever need for remote surgery. By ending the assembly line after 13, Congress could clip more than $4 billion from the 1991 budget.

No doubt Bush has his reasons for submitting such an archaic defense budget. It pacifies the far Republican right, as well as the various hard-liners within the Administration. It also gives Congress a chance to do its ritual budget-slicing without coming anywhere near muscle, much less bone. And as Mario Cuomo has suggested, it may even be a way to save up the peace dividend until just before Bush's re-election campaign. If so, Bush more than deserves for the strategy to backfire—for Congress to take offense and retaliate in kind. The cuts outlined above could be multiplied several times over by a broad, bracing scrutiny of the entire defense budget.

Alas, nothing this dramatic is to be expected from the Democrats. And the problem isn't just Nunn. Among the other likely sources of inaction are the instinctive protection of legislators' parochial interests and fear of the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction law. Conventional wisdom has it that if Democrats cut the defense budget nearly as deeply as it would be cut by the automatic cuts called for by Gramm-Rudman, then Bush will simply reject the budget and wait for the automatic cuts to kick in. After all (the theory goes), the accompanying automatic cuts in the domestic budget will be much more to his liking than to the Democrats'. But would this really make Bush's life any easier? Does he want to be seen as having (*a*) vetoed a defense budget that embodied a hefty peace dividend and (*b*) thereby brought on lots of indiscriminate and very painful domestic cuts? If the story acquired the right sort of spin, the resulting publicity could make Bush's refusal to raise taxes look downright irresponsible. Go ahead, Congress: make his day. •

NOTEBOOK

NEOCONS BITE DOGS: The upheavals in the bloc appear to be causing corresponding, if smaller-scale, *bouleversements* closer to home. For example, Joshua Muravchik's article in this issue—borrowed in advance, with permission, from the March-April *American Enterprise*—is notable not only for its own sake but also because its author is a prominent "hard-liner," a representative of the political tendency loosely and not always accurately called neoconservatism. Jeane Kirkpatrick has already weighed in behind Muravchik, writing in her syndicated column that "his explanation fits the facts and removes the mysteries of how Gorbachev, who seemed a conventional Marxist-Leninist, has moved so far away from dictatorship and toward institutions and relations based on consent." The day after Gorbachev and the Central Committee deep-sixed Article Six, the *New York Times* rounded up some usual suspects for their reactions. Richard Pipes, alleged neocon, was ecstatic. Stephen Cohen, alleged paleoliberal, was skeptical. The old categories are proving less useful all the time. Good.

COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE UNIVERSE WATCH WATCH: Modernism surrendered to capitalism a long time ago, but occasionally the surrender still startles. The critic Harold Rosenberg called abstract expressionism "action painting," and finally one abstract expressionist is getting in on the action. Look at the February 5 issue of *Newsweek*. There appears a full-page ad, titled "Every canvas is a journey all its own," showing the painter Helen Frankenthaler wearing a Rolex watch. The watch is mysteriously called "Oyster Perpetual Lady Datejust." "I've explored a variety of directions and themes over the years," Frankenthaler says. "But I think in all my painting you can see the signature of one artist, the work of one wrist." "And on that immensely talented wrist," the copywriter waxes on, "Helen Frankenthaler has chosen to wear a Rolex." The *révoltés* at the Cedar Tavern would

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have been revolted. Alas, poor Pollock. He would have been the perfect Dewar's profile.

AMANDLA! YO VINNIE!

—*New York Times*
February 10

—*New York Times*
February 12

IN A STUNNING HANS MORGENTHAU ORIGINAL: Among the presenters at a recent awards dinner put on by the Council of Fashion Designers of America were Diane Sawyer, Brooke Shields, and one Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, who gave a medal to Oscar de la Renta for "lifetime achievement." •

Perrier on the rocks.

WATER DOWN

By Henry Fairlie

For a weekend, the news was big. Nothing more could happen in Moscow, since Dan Rather and Peter Jennings had left. But Ted Koppel, Tom Brokaw, and Rather all turned up in South Africa, and such is the power of the anchors, Nelson Mandela was at once released. Blacks in American cities as in South Africa danced in the streets. But the big news these days all seems to come from abroad. Nothing as significant and electrifying ever happens in America. No issue here arouses any passions. Wrong. On Saturday, February 10, a news story sent frissons, then shock waves, through the cohorts, as demographers call them, of the nation's young elites. Perrier Group of America Inc. announced that it had recalled 72 million of its addictive green bottles after the discovery of benzene in some samples.

By Sunday, as Maureen Dowd reported on the front page of the *New York Times*, the American middle and upper-middle classes were rent into mourners and gloaters. "An entire class of people," said James Buckley, a Republican consultant, "have just had their weekend ruined." Worse news sank in. The smug bottles would not reappear in America for possibly three months. Then the final blow fell. Source Perrier S.A. in France announced that it was indefinitely closing down production from its magical underground spring in Vergèze. Wendy Wasserstein said, "We'll all have to go back to scotch," although it was not clear in print whether she was grieving or relieved.

Ms. Wasserstein should never have given it up. Scotch whisky (from the Scots Gaelic *uisge beatha*, meaning literally "the water of life") is made from nutritious whole grains, mainly wheat, and the clear water that splashes down the burns of the heather braes of my native glens. The distinctive taste of the whiskeys is not acquired from any artificial additive, but from the quantity of peat (from the same glens) used in the curing, the manner of distilling, and the kind of casks employed for maturing them. So pure is the product that the shepherds and lairds in each glen that boasts its own malt (unblended) scotch say that, if one *must* barbarously add water, it should be only from the burns of the glen in which it was made. No scotch has ever been found to be contaminated. The God of Presbyterians, and He is a jealous God, would not countenance it.

The abandonment of such a wholesome and convivial liquor for a suspect Gallic product, cleverly marketed at up to $3.50 a supercilious bottle, is the height of youthful frivolity and depth of abject surrender to the peer pressures of "lifestyle." I am not by nature a gloater. He who gloats will not laugh last. But when everything one innocently enjoys has for two decades been scorned, condemned, and subject to punitive taxation; when one has been banished to the back of commercial flights and is now further harassed and drilled if one seeks lawful passage on them, while indulgent Perrier parents bring on unruly American infants who are not fit to be in a confined public space, then even a worm, after long persecution, may be allowed to smack its lips—if a worm has lips—at the discomfiture of its oppressors which, as long foretold by the prophets, the jealous God in his wroth has now visited upon their hubris.

But "tak a cup o' kindness yet," as Rabbie Burns said: I have the interests of Ms. Wasserstein at heart. At $3.50 the little green bottle is a rip-off of the first water. (So are the prices at health food stores.) If the dinks (Double Income No Kids) must drink mineral water, plenty of American springs provide just as good for much less. They buy the bottle and the label. As a bartender once said to me of the bimbos and their blow-dry companions who order Perrier on the rocks, they want their pure French mineral water to be poured into a glass of ice cubes frozen from Potomac water! The gullibility of today's young professionals in their fretting over their bodily well-being is remarkable. Thus they will pay through the mouth, literally, for what one could once normally have expected to be provided

continued on page 12

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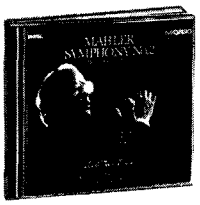
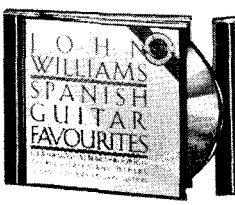
CLASSIC

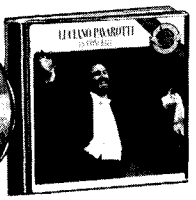
Jean-Pierre Rampal— *Music, My Love* (CBS Master.) 383·349



Mahler: Symphony No.2 "Resurrection." Gilbert Kaplan, London Symphony(MCA Classics) 376·517/396·515



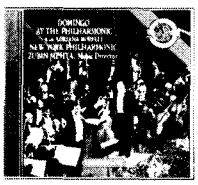
John Williams—Spanish Guitar Favorites (CBS Master.) 378·646



Luciano Pavarotti— Pavarotti in Concert (CBS Master.) 373·548

Portrait of Wynton Marsalis (CBS Master.) 373·5

TAKE ANY 8 COMPAC



Placido Domingo—At The Philharmonic (CBS Master.) 379·289

Liszt: Piano Sonata; 3 Petrarca Sonnets; more. Vladimir Feltsman, Piano (CBS Master.) 388·538

Yo-Yo Ma/Stephane Grapelli—Anything Goes. *Mostly Cole Porter Tunes* (CBS) 387·845

Placido Domingo—The Unknown Puccini (CBS Master.) 387·829

Samuel Ramey—Opera Arias (Angel) 387·761

Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsodies. Zubin Mehta and Israel Philharmonic (CBS Master.) 386·607

Philip Glass: Solo Piano(CBS Masterworks) 386·581

Bob James—J.S.Bach: Concertos For 2 & 3 Keyboards & Synthorn. Guher & Suher Pekinel, Pianos (CBS Masterworks) 386·565

CBS Masterworks Dinner Classics—The Viennese Album (CBS Master.) 386·508

Stravinsky: Firebird; Jeu de Cartes. Esa-Pekka Salonen, Philharmonia (CBS Master.) 385·203

Sibelius: Symphonies Nos. 3 & 7. Simon Rattle, Birmingham Symphony (Angel) 385·146

The King's Singers—20th Anniversary Celebration Sampler (Angel) 385·021

Mozart: Flute Concertos; Adante; Rondo. Jean-Pierre Rampal And Zubin Mehta, Israel Phil. (CBS Master.) 383·364

Haydn: Piano Sonatas 33, 38, 58, 60. Emanuel Ax (CBS Master.) 383·331

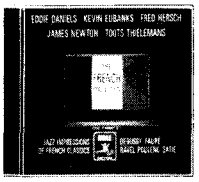
Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 3; Rhapsody On Theme Of Paganini. Vladimir Feltsman; Zubin Mehta, Israel Philharm. (CBS Master.) 383·315

Barber: Adagio For Strings; "The School For Scandal" Overture; etc. Slatkin, St. Louis Sym. (Angel) 383·307

Sibelius: Symphony No. 5. Esa-Pekka Salonen and Philharmonia Orchestra (CBS Master.) 358·135

Tchaikovsky Waltzes— Comissiona, Houston Sym. (Pro Arte) 357·871

Beethoven: Piano Conc. No. 5. Perahia; Haitink, Concertgebouw Orch. (CBS Masters.) 357·657



The French Collection— Jazz Impressions Of French Classics by Ravel, Debussy, Faure, Poulenc, Satie (Angel) 386·623

Bach: Brandenberg Concertos; etc. Ransom Wilson, Gerald Schwarz, L.A. Chamber Or.(Angel) 372·367/392·365

Lotte Lenya—The Lotte Lenya Album (CBS Master.) 371·138

Lotte Lenya Sings Kurt Weill. 3 Penny Opera, etc. (CBS Master.) 371·112

Gershwin: American In Paris; Cuban Overture; etc. Slatkin, St. Louis Sym. (Angel) 371·096

The Bernstein Songbook —selections from West Side Story, On The Town, etc. Bernstein cond. (CBS) 371·088

Leonard Bernstein, Conductor—The Encore Collection, Vol. I (CBS Master.) 371·047

Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade; Russian Easter Over.; Mehta, Israel Phil. (CBS Master.) 371·021

John Arpin—Scott Joplin's Greatest Hits (Fanfare/ProArte) 370·221

Schumann: Symphonies Nos. 1 (Spring) and 4. Comissiona, Houseton Sym.(Pro Arte) 369·850

John Williams—The Baroque Album (CBS Master.) 369·769

Claude Bolling: Bolling's Greatest Hits(CBS) 369·751

Mozart: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik; **Pachelbel:** Canon; more. Marriner, Academy Of St. Martins-In-The-Fields(Angel) 367·375

Gershwin: Rhapsody In Blue; etc. Tilson Thomas, L.A. Philharmonic (CBS Masters.) 339·226

Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 40 & 41 (Jupiter). Kubelik, Bavarian Radio Symphony (CBS Master.) 339·044

Chopin: Impromptus; Barcarolle; Berceuse; etc. Murray Perahia, piano (CBS Master.) 337·550

Bach: Sonatas For Flute & Harpsichord (cpl); more. Rampal, Pinnock.(CBS Master.) 336·578/396·572

Maria Callas—The Unknown Recordings 1957-1969 (Angel) 364·596

Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1. Peter Serkin; Robert Shaw, Atlanta Sym.(Pro Arte) 363·127

Dvorak: Violin Concerto; Romance; Carnival Over. Midori; Mehta, NY Phil. (CBS Master.) 386·573

Brahms: Double Concerto. Isaac Stern, Yo-Yo Ma; Abbado, Chicago Sym.(CBS Master.)367·250

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto; **Saint-Saens:** Intr. & Rondo Capriccioso; **Massenet:** Meditation. Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg (Angel) 366·872

Gilbert & Sullivan: H.M.S. Pinafore. Phipps, New Sadler's Wells Opera Chorus & Orch.(MCA Classics) 366·831/396·838

Canadian Brass—Bach: Art Of The Fugue (CBS Master.) 366·740

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9. Norrington, The London Classical Players(Angel) 365·619

Placido Domingo—A Love Until the End of Time (CBS) 365·262

Vladimir Feltsman— American "Live" Debut (CBS Master.) 365·254/395·251

Verdi: Requiem. Muti, Pavarotti; Chorus & Orch. of Teatro Alla Scala(Angel) 365·247/395·244

Wynton Marsalis— Baroque Music For Trumpets. (CBS Master.) 364·695

Copland: Clarinet Concerto; Quiet City; Music For The Theatre; more. Schwarz, N.Y: Chamber Sym.(Angel) 383·299

Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 (Italian); Overture & Incidental Music to "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Mackerras, Orch. Of The Age Of Enlight. (Virgin Classics) 383·190

Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 (Eroica). Norrington, London Classical Players(Angel) 382·754

Great Sopranos Of Our Time (Angel) 381·335

Great Tenors Of Our Time (Angel) 381·319

Barber: Symphony No. 2; more. A. Schenck, New Zealand Symphony (Stradivari Class.) 380·014

Portrait Of Yo-Yo Ma (CBS Master.) 379·941

Canadian Brass— Gabrieli, Monteverdi —Antiphonal Music (CBS Master.) 379·933

Andres Segovia, Guitar— Segovia Collection, Vol. 5 (MCA Classics) 379·297

Enrico Caruso—Opera Arias and Songs. Milan 1902-1904 (Angel) 379·255

Mozart: Symphony No.41 (Jupiter); Divertimento No.1,K136. Muti, Berlin Phil.(Angel) 386·466

Beethoven: Complete Sonatas For Piano & Cello. Yo-Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax(CBS Master.) 362·913/392·910

Andres Segovia Collection, Vol. 1. Music by Bach (MCA Classics) 362·293

The Jazz Album— *Simon Rattle, London Sinfonietta*; Peter Donohoe, piano; Harvey & The Wallbangers. A Delight! (Angel) 362·004

Paul O'Dette—Robin Is To The Greenwood Gone. Elizabethan Lute Music (Nonesuch) 361·758

Gilbert & Sullivan: Highlights from "The Mikado" English National Opera (MCA Classics) 359·968

Gershwin: Overtures. J. McGlinn And The New Princess Theatre Orch. (Angel) 359·752

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto; etc. Zukerman; Mehta, Israel Philhar. (CBS Master.) 336·461

Debussy: La Mer; Three Nocturnes. Andre Previn, London Symphony(Angel) 335·679

Beethoven: Overtures (Fidelio; Leonore No.3; more). Tennstedt, London Phil.(Angel) 335·075

Tchaikovsky: Suites From The Ballets: Swan Lake & Sleeping Beauty. Muti, Philadelphia Orch.(Angel) 334·680

Mahler: Symphony No. 4. *Kathleen Battle, Soprano*; Lorin Maazel, Vienna Phil.(CBS Master.) 332·866

Brahms: Symphony No. 1. Tennstedt, London Philhar.(Angel) 332·668

Bizet: Carmen and L'Arlesienne Suites 1 & 2. Ozawa, Orch. Nat'l De France(Angel) 331·595

Prokofiev: Peter & The Wolf; **Saint-Sains:** Carnival Of The Animals. I Perlman; K&M Labeque; Mehta, Israel Philharmonic (Angel) 331·322

Mozart's Greatest Hits—Theme From Elvira Madigan; Rondo Alla Turca; more. Various artists (CBS Master.) 330·613

Wagner: Overtures. Tannhauser; Lohengrin; Die Meistersinger; more. Tennstedt, Berlin Phil.(Angel) 330·134

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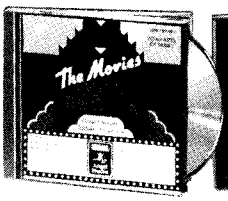

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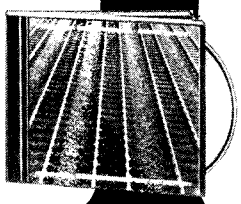

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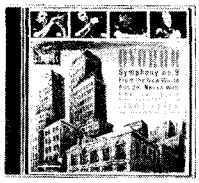

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free: a glass of water on one's table in a restaurant.

It was no wonder that the manager of the Palm Restaurant in Washington could be seen gloomily taking Perrier off each table. In Los Angeles, Perrier "hasn't been hip for a while," according to the manager of Hugo's Restaurant. He said: "We serve Ram-Losa instead because it's a smaller bottle with less water for the same price, so we make even more money than with Perrier." What is more, I have long shared the suspicion of many that no small, previously undiscovered spring can ceaselessly produce a Niagara of water sufficient to fill, at all times, 72 million bottles for the North American market alone. Do the young professionals care to inquire what they are paying for? No. The bottle is status, the label is assurance, the content is French. They can cease to fret. *Merde!* Since when have the French been the paragons of purity in their lives?

But the fretting during the weekend was fearful to hear. A resident of—natch!—North Side Chicago whimpered: "First they tell us mother's milk causes cancer. Then they tell us that oat bran doesn't reduce cholesterol. Now they tell us Perrier contains benzene. What are we supposed to do?" Does he not have a mind of his own? Live by the "experts," you will perish by the "experts." Whatever happened to the sufficient injunction of my Scottish mother and elders: "A little of what you fancy does you good"? With that one is released from the distractions of the body anxious.

Epictetus, the Phrygian Stoic philosopher, wrote: "It is a sign of [a nature not finely tempered] to make, for instance, a great fuss about" exercise, eating, drinking, walking, riding. "All these things ought to be done *merely by the way*. . . ." (Italics added.) Matthew Arnold commented: "This is admirable." So it is, and I commend it to Ms. Wasserstein, who I believe is redeemable. She should take "a wee dram"—an elastic Scottish measure—in the name of Rabbie Burns, who took many, enabling him to contribute a formidable three-and-a-half pages of well-loved lines to the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. •

Bill Bradley takes a deep breath.

HOLDING PATTERNS

By Fred Barnes

Now is the time, says Democratic Senator Bill Bradley, for all good men to "pause" and "do nothing" on taxes. The Tax Reform Act of 1986, Bradley's handiwork to a large extent, created "a fairer, more efficient tax system," Bradley told the House Ways and Means Committee on February 8. It's been "a plus for savings and investment." So don't tinker. Don't cut the tax rate on capital gains, and don't enact President Bush's other tax proposal, the Family Savings Plan. Bradley called it "a sham." As for the Social Security payroll tax cut proposed by Senator Pat Moynihan—a Democratic proposal with breathtaking political appeal—Bradley is opposed to that, too. Once again, his advice is to "pause" and "do nothing."

For Bradley, this is a fallow period. His prospects for re-election in New Jersey this year are bright as ever. He's enormously popular, he has raised $9 million, and the only Republicans considering a race against him are no-names or neophytes. But his allure as a Presidential candidate in 1992 has suffered. Bradley doesn't seem to mind. His approach to running for President mirrors his position on taxes: pause and do nothing. He's not claiming new issues as his own. He's not a sharp critic of Bush except on capital gains. He's not quietly assembling a Presidential campaign team (he has a coterie of longtime advisers). Bradley has a standard line on his political future: "I'm running for re-election to the Senate in 1990 and that's as far as I'm thinking." I believe him.

Bradley's pause/do-nothing attitude toward the Presidency isn't unique. No other Democrat is running for President. No Republican either, but the Republicans have a good excuse. Their main man, Bush, is planning to run for re-election in 1992. After one year in the White House, he looks like a better bet for a second term than any President since Dwight Eisenhower. The alibi of Democrats is that, like Bradley, they're concentrating on smaller races in 1990. "I'm not thinking about the Presidency right now," says Governor Mario Cuomo of New York. "I'm thinking about the Governorship." Senators Al Gore of Tennessee and Sam Nunn of Georgia are running for re-election. Jesse Jackson must decide whether to run for Mayor of Washington, D.C. Richard Gephardt promised not to run for President in 1992 if elected House Majority Leader. He was. Senator Lloyd Bentsen is considering a Presidential race and his allies are talking him up, but he hasn't taken any tangible steps.

It wasn't this way four years ago. By early 1986 a dozen candidates were running or preparing to. Bush had raised about $6 million. Pat Robertson's Freedom Councils were clearing the way for his Presidential bid. Jack Kemp was raising money for his last House race, hoping funds would be left over from it as a nest egg for a Presidential run. None was, it turned out, but Kemp ran anyway. Among Democrats, Gary Hart's operation was going full tilt, and Jackson, Gephardt, Bruce Babbitt, and Senator Joe Biden of Delaware were starting their campaigns. Bradley was urged to run, but didn't.

One reason for the activity was Ronald Reagan's retirement: the Presidency would be an open seat. Now there's Bush. "I suspect Democrats aren't running for the same reason Republicans aren't," says Democratic

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consultant Greg Schneiders. "They don't think there's going to be a vacancy." When Bush leaves in 1996, there will be. So why not hold off? The potential Democratic candidates, except Bentsen, are young enough to wait. Bradley is 46.

Besides, Bush has anesthetized Bradley and other Democrats. They're unwilling to attack him forcefully. "At this stage," says Bradley, "I like the [Bush] music. I like what he's said about the environment, education, kids. He's kind of laid out for himself an agenda on which to be judged." But he shouldn't be judged yet. Cuomo says that Bush, by latching on to Democratic issues, has advanced the liberal agenda more in one year "than Democrats have in the last eight years. There are things he's doing right. Let him do a little more. I don't think anybody should make a judgment on the Bush administration. He's at 80 percent in the polls. What are you going to say? He's conned the American people?"

Bradley emerged in the early 1980s as the Democratic point man on taxes, Third World debt, even issues involving children's health. In 1985 and 1986 he led the party on tax reform. Bradley turned semi-hawkish on foreign and defense issues, developing an image as a Democrat who's acceptably liberal but not beholden to the party's left wing. In 1988 he was sought after as a stump speaker, and he campaigned vigorously for Democratic candidates. Before the Democratic National Convention, Michael Dukakis tried to talk Bradley into becoming his Vice Presidential running mate. Bradley declined. In 1989 all that changed. Bradley became nearly invisible as a national political figure. That was partly because he began focusing on New Jersey issues. But not entirely.

For the moment, Bradley has lost his edge. Politics now, he says, "is all tactics." In the Senate, "I'm not really dealing with fundamental questions." Don't look to him or other Congressional Democrats for the overarching agenda for the 1990s. Even if he got that assignment, Bradley is unclear what he'd come up with. "We're moving into a new world," he says. "What is the nature of that world? It's a little too early to say." Nor are Democrats in Congress equipped to sharpen differences with Republican policies. The gap between their liberal and conservative wings is "so vast that it's difficult to reach a consensus that is sharp enough to draw a contrast." Better to leave the job of coming up with Democratic alternatives to Governors.

I don't mean to sell Bradley short. He's in remission, but he's still one of the most clever, innovative, and disciplined politicians in America. He's willing to cut against the grain. He's a free trader in a party that's increasingly protectionist, and he takes an iconoclastic view on dealing with Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviets. Bradley believes Gorbachev is "the FDR of socialism. He'll adopt capitalist means to save socialism." But he shouldn't be spared tough decisions. Bradley applauds *perestroika*, but says Americans "shouldn't pay for it."

In a 1988 speech Bradley said, "We are cold calculating capitalists who maximize profit, and that is how we should relate to the Soviet Union. . . . We should look at an investment in or trade with the Soviet Union and apply the same criteria we would apply to an investment in New Jersey or Belgium or Brazil." He said business leaders eager to grant the Soviets special concessions are "romantic capitalists." That tack was tried in the 1970s and failed. "They are rushing and stumbling to make a deal because it's the in thing to do. Whatever their reasons, they don't serve the U.S. interests, and ironically they also don't serve the Soviet interests. By being rational capitalists, and not romantic capitalists, we will do the most to promote reform in the Soviet Union by clearly identifying for them what it takes to be part of the dynamic world economic system."

Don't assume from this that Bradley has veered sharply to the right. He hasn't. He's just hard to pigeonhole. On capital gains, Bradley sounds like a newfangled populist liberal. To attack Bush's cut, he used data, not class struggle rhetoric. In 1987, "People who earn over $100,000 a year [in adjusted gross income] took 68 percent of all capital gains," he said in a Senate floor speech on November 14. "Only two percent of the taxpayers took 68 percent of all the capital gains. . . . Let us not confuse the issue by characterizing the capital gains cut as a boon for people who are not making a whole lot of money." What would be a boon to these folks is Moynihan's payroll tax cut. Because of Bradley's credibility on tax issues, Moynihan badly needed his support. But Bradley didn't follow his populist instincts, and the Moynihan cut is languishing.

Next year Bradley is bound to consider a run for the Presidency. In his case, 1991 isn't too late to start. "The system forces you to get out front, unless you're a name," says Cuomo. "A Bradley doesn't have to get out front" now. My guess is he won't run in 1992 (some of his advisers think this). "If he decides 1992 is not a good year to challenge a reasonably popular, moderate Republican incumbent, then he'll wait until 1996," says Mark Siegel, a Democratic consultant and Bradley friend. Bradley is a slow study. He doesn't embrace an issue until he's mastered it or jump into a race unless he's convinced the timing is right. "He's his own clock," says Siegel.

The rap on Bradley is that he's a boring speaker. Maybe not. On December 15 he talked about race relations before an interracial audience in Greenville, Mississippi. It wasn't a rousing speech. It was very personal. Bradley talked about growing up in a small town among relatives prejudiced against blacks, about his days on a predominantly black pro basketball team, about people who ask him about playing with "them." He said whites and blacks must try harder to get along. Bradley ended with a quote from Maya Angelou and sat down. There was a smattering of applause, then more. It grew and grew and didn't stop for a long time. •

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Awaiting a new Atlanticism.

WHO NEEDS NATO?

By Morton Kondracke

If the Warsaw Pact is dead, what threat justifies the continued existence of a Western military alliance? If the Soviet Union pulls its troops out of Eastern Europe, why do U.S. troops need to stay in Western Europe? Does the United States need to keep nuclear weapons in Europe, and if so, what kind? When Germany is reunited, how big an army should it have? Should Germany be a member of NATO, neutral, or something in between? What's to be the chief policy-making forum for solving European problems, and is the United States in or out?

The Bush Administration clearly has preferences on all these questions, but even the highest-ranking Administration officials admit there is no detailed Bush plan for what a post-cold war Europe should look like. Nor has the Administration called its allies into conference to hammer out a joint strategy for erecting a new European security structure. So far, ad-hockery has worked, mainly because the Soviet Union has given in to every Western imperative, up to and including the reunification of Germany. The Soviets have said "*nyet*" to a reunified Germany's staying in NATO, but there are hints they are even rethinking that.

If things are moving so smoothly in our direction, why plan? Because, some heavy-duty strategists say, we are in danger of being swept along by events, by euphoria, and by our own tactical decisions, and may suddenly find ourselves at a place we'd rather not be. As Henry Kissinger put it in a recent article, "Waiting on events is an invitation to chaos and to the unilateral dismantling of institutions that have brought us this far."

Without a plan, Kissinger and others contend, each country is likely to have its foreign policy determined by internal political forces. European parliaments could cut back severely on defense spending, leading the U.S. Congress to feel affronted and pull U.S. troops out of Europe. If the Social Democratic Party (SPD) wins the East German elections in March, as expected, and also the West German elections later in the year, a reunified Germany might be neutral. As Kissinger wrote, "After a few years Germany might repeat its historic mistake of attempting to achieve its own independent security, an enterprise which twice in this century produced global catastrophe."

Kissinger also fears that Bush's proposal to retain 225,000 U.S. troops in Western Europe and no more than 195,000 Soviet troops in Eastern Europe may eventually lead—when the Eastern Europeans negotiate total reduction of Soviet forces from their territory—to Soviet insistence that the United States keep only 30,000 troops on the European continent, too few, in his view, to deter anything. Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, on the other hand, worries that the Bush proposal—and the lengthy process of negotiating it with the Soviets at the conventional forces in Europe (CFE) talks in Vienna—will slow down Soviet withdrawals.

Having a plan will help bolster the Administration when it runs into opposition from Congress and from resurgent isolationists of the left and right, who already are dusting off old Dwight Eisenhower quotes to the effect that America's postwar presence in Europe should be strictly temporary. Those who favor continuation of NATO and continuation of a U.S. troop presence are going to be asked again and again, "Why?" They need good answers. It would help if the answers came not just from the United States, but from a joint resolution of the allies, preferably after a major study by governments or senior "wise men."

The Administration needs to do its own clear thinking because every so often some official will raise a possibility that confuses everyone, as when Secretary of State James Baker said that Germany might be just an "associate member" of NATO. He quickly recanted—"member, member, member!" he said the next time asked—but inadvertently he may have created a Soviet option. Baker also invited the Soviets to invade Romania about the time the United States was invading Panama, despite the fact that it's been American strategy for 40 years to keep the Soviets from going anywhere they aren't already. Baker often talks as though the United States and the Soviet Union aren't strategic rivals anymore. Others in the Administration clearly disagree. A plan would help everyone to read from the same script.

It could be titled "A New Atlanticism," and it could be backed by strong logic. It is the policy the Administration favors, but it needs to be systematized. As one high-ranking official said, "NATO is our institutional voice in the councils of Europe. We want to stay part of Europe, and it's the way we keep our presence." That's true, but in the post-cold war world, we might supplement NATO with institutional links to economic Europe, possibly through a treaty with the European Community.

Bush has said, rightly, that we need NATO because there remains a residual Soviet threat—hundreds of thousands of troops in European Russia, plus thousands of tanks and nuclear warheads, plus an uncertain political future. As Bush has not said directly, we need a NATO with both the United States and Germany as members because it improves the likelihood that Germany will not go it alone and eventually dominate Europe. If the Soviet Union withdraws its objections to German membership in NATO, that will be the reason why.

How many U.S. troops does it take to have a politically potent "presence"? Administration officials acknowledge that 225,000 is an interim number, not the final

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total. They say they do not have a rock-bottom number yet and would not announce it if they did, for fear it would interfere with the CFE talks and inspire Congress to cut down to that figure right away. But such numbers are floating around—usually built upon the idea of retaining one armored corps capable of fighting and units designed to receive reinforcements, or a total of between 80,000 and 100,000 persons. The Administration ought to begin discussing the rationale for such numbers and the conditions under which the reductions should occur. It might pre-empt Congressional action and also de-link U.S. troop levels from Soviet levels. It's also time to plan for CFE follow-on talks, which will set the size of other European forces, including Germany's.

Administration officials admit—though not in public—that the Lance 2 short-range nuclear rocket probably will never be deployed (because it would land in Eastern Europe), but planning needs to be done for alternative forms of nuclear deterrence as long as the Soviets retain an arsenal capable of threatening Europe.

Ultimately, troops and nukes may not be necessary. The Soviet Union may become a democracy totally preoccupied with its own internal repair. Germany may be content to be Europe's friendly banker. International tensions may be entirely economic and political, soluble in a regional forum growing out of either the Conference on European Security and Co-operation (of which the United States and the Soviets are members) or the European Economic Community. When violence breaks out it may be entirely internal and manageable. On the other hand, prudent people do not simply hope that Utopia will create itself. The task of the Bush Administration is to help create the structures that will keep Europe at peace for another 50 years. •

Gorbachev vs. Vesenko.

PARTY FAULT LINES

By James Blitz

MOSCOW

Forget Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, Ligachev, and all the other Kremlin heavies who have lately dominated the world's headlines. Ask the coal miners of the Donetsk region in the Ukraine who made the best speech at the most important Central Committee plenum of the Gorbachev era. No hesitation: "Kostya Vesenko," they chime. At least, that is what a large bunch of them did on Soviet TV's 9 o'clock news.

Kostya who? To find his speech, you must wade through the acres of verbatim transcripts of the speeches that Central Committee members hurled at one another in three days of debate, all assiduously published in the pages of *Pravda*. (These days Gorbachev is careful to ensure that his opponents are on the record.) And there, at the bottom of page 4 in the February 6 edition, is the offering from Comrade Vesenko, a master miner at the Artyom Coal Factory. He was one of the few lay Party members invited to participate in the Soviet establishment's equivalent of Judgment Day: the day the Communist Party decided whether to renounce its monopoly on power.

"There are five of us miners here," Vesenko began. "I must say, it's very odd to be here. I don't know how we got here or why we are here and I'm not going to start pondering it now."

In this stumbling, disarming hiccup, Vesenko highlighted a problem that now haunts the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party irrespective of what they vote on: they appear archaic and irrelevant to the average Soviet worker, even to a worker who is himself a Party member. This is partly because, even in the age of the relatively youthful Gorbachev, the membership of the Central Committee is still distinctly unyouthful. "I thought I was in an old people's home," one of Vesenko's fellow miners told a news agency after the plenum had finished. He was not alone. "Your average age is about 60," warned Svyatoslav Fyodorov, the world-famous eye surgeon, in his speech to the plenum. "As a doctor I can tell you that most people lose their capacity to think originally after the age of 45."

But the Communist Party hierarchy is plagued by a public that is not so much alienated as indifferent. There was an enormous and variegated pro-democracy demonstration outside the Kremlin on the eve of the plenum. But the attention of most people is consumed by the struggle to find a few mouthfuls to eat, not by whether Party leaders introduce a multiparty system. "My mother can't eat voting slips," my neighbor remarked to me the other day as we both stood in line for fish at the local inconvenience store. As a leading authority, my cleaning lady, says, "Twenty-five percent of the people in this country are interested in politics. The rest are interested in getting dressed and getting fed."

Mikhail Gorbachev has been trying to overturn my cleaning lady's thesis. But the food crisis is eating away at the CPSU's roots—the rank-and-file membership at the local village and district level. A worker called Arkhipov summed up for the Central Committee the results of the Party's recruiting efforts in his factory: "A hundred and nine members have left the Party in the whole of last year. Another 70 more have left in the last four weeks."

Reversing the decline is an urgent task, not least because of the nationwide regional elections to the local Supreme Soviets, now only weeks away. No Communist Party candidate is taking to the hustings with confidence. Many are certain to be routed in these multi-candidate elections by representatives of independent groups that stop just short of being parties themselves:

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the Popular Fronts in the Baltics and Moldavia, the independent Rukh movement in Kiev, the Democratic Union movement in Moscow and Leningrad. No wonder Eduard Shevardnadze told the plenum that multiparty politics is a fait accompli.

In this situation, the Party's decision to abandon its monopoly on power is not as suicidal as it may appear. The formal prospect of a multiparty system is not, in the short term, going to swamp the Communists with much more political competition than they are already facing in the regional elections. The fate of Article Six is of no consequence to that of a Party candidate fighting in, say, the Moldavian Supreme Soviet elections against a lot of hot, heady Moldavian nationalists. Moreover, removing the offending article will initially force the Party to work a little harder to please. It's a bit like taking the safety net away from under a team of tightrope walkers. The acrobats' minds are suddenly concentrated wonderfully on the task of staying on the rope. The hope is that the audience, too, will be more impressed with the act.

Unless the Party comes crashing down. But Gorbachev is determined to avoid that. He is not planning to turn his country overnight into a Western-style multiparty system, in which a lot of newly formed parties start attacking the Communist Party's dominant position. Note, for example, these two sentences from Gorbachev's second and final speech: "I think that in some areas of work there is a need to use some of the old mechanisms when new ones have not yet started working. Society should not be left rudderless, without sails and without the means to advance *perestroika* in our country."

It's hard to know exactly what Gorbachev means by this, but it's certain he expects the hand on the rudder to be his own. His intention appears to be not that all parties should be equal, but that one Party should be a little more equal than the others. His recipe will mix residual coercion with a liberal dose of co-optation. The CPSU, he hopes, will become a broader church, talking and negotiating with the independent movements in the country—the coal miners who want bigger pay envelopes and the independent Popular Fronts who want independence for their republics. Ignore these groups, which carry enormous popular support, and they could become deeply antagonistic to the Party.

Of course, this will require some compromises by the Party. When broadening any church, it helps to jettison some of the catechism, and Gorbachev is doing this too. People say he failed to fire any other Party leaders at the plenum, but he did fire one: the late Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Not once was the founder of the Soviet state mentioned in two of the most important speeches Gorbachev has ever delivered.

Killing off Lenin, in fact, is proving painless. Consider what viewers of the evening news saw a few nights prior to the plenum, when an interviewer approached people in the queue for Lenin's mausoleum and asked them why they were standing there. Only one elderly man out of the six interviewees had the faintest idea.

But Gorbachev must know that, whatever happens to the ideology, the power of the Party apparatus cannot be quickly or easily overrun. Even if a Social Democratic Party or a Green Party were to start putting up campaign posters overnight, neither would have any chance of competing against the Communist Party, which has had 70 years to plant its leading personnel in every major position in industry, transport, and the media.

A few days ago, for instance, the weekly news program "Seven Days" ran a live studio interview with an excited member of the Central Committee, who conveyed the fact that the repeal of Article Six had been a "tremendous step forward for the country." Viewers who allowed their eyes to wander down to the lapel on the anchorman's jacket noticed the little red badge advertising his membership in the Party. One Communist talking to another about introducing a multiparty system: that is where Soviet politics currently stands.

In the end, it is the gradual disintegration of the Party that will truly break the political ice. All over the country—in Moscow, in the district parties, in the republics—the fabric of the CPSU is being stretched in every direction by Party members who are battling on behalf of the reformers or the reactionaries. At the plenum, the Central Committee hard-liners showed how determined they are to steer *perestroika* in their direction by the prolonged attack they delivered on Gorbachev. But at the grass roots, events are not favoring them at all: each day brings news of another regional Party committee, filled with hard-liners, being overthrown by the radical Party rank-and-file members beneath them. Tyumen, Volgograd, Chernigov, the Ukraine—every day now, the radical reformers stick new pins in their maps. Gorbachev met the regional Party leaders and told them not to panic. They must be petrified.

So will the CPSU split? It is happening now. There is already a party within the Party. A group called the Democratic Platform Movement, which wants radical political and economic reform, says that if Gorbachev does not deliver it at the 28th Party Congress in June, they will put forward an alternative platform to the one passed at the plenum. And this is no maverick group, either: it is led by the Rector of the Higher Party School, the premier academic establishment in the Party.

Somehow, Gorbachev must try to keep all these disparate groups together under one roof. It is proving an increasingly difficult task. The danger is that as the Party continues to be rent asunder by splits, so its authority in the country will weaken to chronic levels, and the country might even become ungovernable. The purges of the regional Party leaders, the rise of the Popular Fronts, and the endemic food shortages all create a distant rumble in Moscow: *Altogether elsewhere, vast / Herds of reindeer move across / Miles and miles of golden moss, / Silently and very fast.*

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The habit of lying dies hard.

GREAT LENIN'S GHOST

By Martin Peretz

PARIS

The Paris about which books are written and read, the Paris of the cafés around St. Germain des Près, was for decades the capital of a cocky and cavalier European left. Its paladins knew where history was moving forward (in the socialist countries and the Third World) and who was keeping it back (the United States and the countries allied with it, especially their own). This smugness, certainly, was never validated by the ballot, and we know now just how insubstantial were its "objective" foundations. But the Paris *gauchistes* attracted more than their share of attention, and of emulators. They confidently played the favorite game of Marxians: consigning those who did not share their views to the proverbial dustbin. Actually, when the intellectual history of the postwar era is written, the people they so relegated will be seen as the gloomy but clear-eyed prophets of the moral and material catastrophe that was unfolding in Eastern and Central Europe.

These stubbornly grim visionaries—people like Manes Sperber, Boris Souvarine, and Andrei Sinyavsky—constituted an alternative to the confident pro-Communist left. Mostly unnoticed, they made Paris another capital, the capital of a vast refuge from Bolshevism and, later, Stalinism. Here were gathered some of the finest minds and most faithful spirits of the captive nations, producing from endless argument little pieces of *tamizdat* as parcels of hope for home. The truth is, though, that these were people who lived largely without hope, beaten down by the enthusiasm for the revolution of precisely those who should have seen its cruelties and been their own friends and comrades. But Jean-Paul Sartre and those who looked to him did not heed their warnings. These oppositionists were instead disdained, disdained as mere refugees (suddenly a term of umbrage) whose personal grievances and unreliable tales of the dictatorships were at odds with the experience of more authoritative and objective visitors.

Of course, there is no longer much of a triumphalist left in Paris or anywhere else in Europe, and surely none that is capable of the acts of excommunication common in Paris a generation ago. You have only to go into a bookshop to see how the intellectual currents have shifted, how spare are the shelves of testimonials to the spiritual and more concrete achievements of the Communist world. It has, in fact, been at least a decade since this small victory of the obvious over the preposterous was consolidated. But the world of French intellectuals extracts no great price for having been wrong. No one is squirming in contrition or in shame for having uttered monstrous falsehoods. Even the French Communist Party, one of the last redoubts of Stalinism, has signed on to *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Why shouldn't other callous and forgetful folk do the same?

There aren't many of the old anti-Communist exiles around either, though for different reasons. The oppositionists feel no need to mask or deny their past; but the years have taken their toll—in withdrawal, in defeat, in death. Many of the remaining veterans turned up at a recent conference, sponsored by *Le Nouvel Observateur* in the ornate Sorbonne Amphitheater, on the topic "*Après le communisme?*" One could discern from their questions and perorations disguised as questions, and from the conversations in the corridors, the satisfaction they feel at having survived to hear their heresies uttered as orthodoxies, and a few of those heresies uttered by the linear heirs of their tormentors—in Moscow, no less. They now find that their obstreperous and ridiculed presence had made itself felt after all. And, as it turns out, the remnants of the exile are not nearly as exuberant about Mikhail Gorbachev as one would think they might be, not nearly as exuberant as George Bush or James Baker, or as confident that destiny will preside benignly over the ultimate outcome in what we used to call the satellites. Of course, exiled dissidents are customarily less upbeat than Texans. But the commentators of the European press are also not as sanguine about the Plenum's reforms as are their cheerful peers in the States. And one of the factors behind this more generalized skepticism is the credit these doubting old-timers (and some younger writers who helped rescue their message from the winds) have accumulated by their painful fidelity to bitterly resisted truths.

Abel Aganbegyan is not one of them. He lives in Moscow and is certainly no dissident. One of Gorbachev's top economic advisers, author of the influential book *Moving the Mountains* (a title that certainly promises more than it can deliver), Aganbegyan is a *perestroika* stalwart known for what is perceived still as a startling, even daring confession: he has admitted that the stressed and succumbing Communist societies, the So-

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viet Union included, are "built on years of lying." The question is, then: How hard does the habit of lying die?

To be sure, there are some truths that can no longer be lied about. No one can deny the dire circumstances of the Soviet economy. Its condition is what makes so compelling that macabre bit of gallows humor that refers to the contemporary U.S.S.R. as "Weimar Russia." It is, in fact, rather worse than Weimar: a worthless economy, unrepayable foreign debts, no reliable sources of long-term foreign investment, an obsolete industrial base, primitive (and often perilous) medical care, backwardness in computer technology, a truly fouled environment, endemic public sullenness, and shortages, reminiscent of wartime, of food, fuel, and other staples. Now Soviet negotiators are telling the Czechs and Hungarians that the troops can't get out yet because the housing shortage at home means there's no place to put them. It's a novel argument for empire, but one that won't wash with the colonized: much of what is said about the Soviet economy can be said about theirs. This is cold comfort for the Russians. Once upon a time, the Soviet Union was going to be a model for its satrapies, and if history went according to theory, a model for the entire world. What it has become instead is the model of a new and mystifying analytic category: the first, or at least the most important, formerly developed country.

Many a Ph.D. dissertation will be written on how "socialist" economics imposed itself on a developing society and forced it to spend, in the words of one placard held aloft during the Red Square demonstration before the Central Committee meeting, "70 years on the way to nowhere." It will be harder to explain why a leadership persisted in its disastrous ways. And how will other social observers read the Kremlin's efforts to improve things now? Those schooled in skepticism—the wary Paris exiles, for example—already point to the fact that the leadership wants to have it both ways. Aganbegyan and his patron haven't given up the notion that something called socialism still offers a remedy for the advanced maladies of the Soviet economy. But, more and more, it looks like socialism is the disease for which it pretends to be the cure. So Gorbachev and Company grudgingly make whatever concessions to market measures they assume capitalist bankers will require: restoring small family farming tracts, permitting private businesses with a few employees, easing the way for industrial ventures co-owned by public enterprises and passive foreign investors. But such foreign investors will be few, and these reluctant gestures will not come close to doing the trick. They will not satisfy the bankers, and they will not redeem socialism.

So why this relentless obsession with socialism by people who have no more lived by its putative ideals than did J. P. Morgan? Simon Jenkins writes that in Gorbachev, as in his economics tutor, "a Leninist is still looking for a better millennium." This, then, is the lie they tell themselves, the lie that warrants the other lies. The millennium is, moreover, a large lie, one whose very ambitiousness dictates a command economy in which an unpredictable market cannot be trusted to function as arbiter and in which government remains the manager, macro and micro, of economic life.

Lies have had a special place in the history of communism. Economic data provided by Soviet authorities to the indigenous population and to international information gatherers have never been reliable. The discrepancies between facts and official facts distorted not only perceptions of economic reality but also the efforts made to affect this reality. This mendacity was often a circumstantial necessity. Exiles still visibly shudder when recalling the period from the 1930s to '50s when, at Stalin's whim, the genetic theories of Trofim Lysenko governed Soviet agriculture. Managers of farm collectives faced the choice of two possible lies. They could continue to farm as they always had and lie that they were following Lysenko, or they could accommodate to Lysenkism and, facing an inevitable decline in production, lie about how much they had produced. What they couldn't do was say that Lysenko was wrong, because Stalin had directed that he was right.

The current crisis in Soviet agriculture cannot be traced to anybody's nutcake theory. It cannot even be blamed, though it would be pleasant, simply on Minister of Agriculture Ligachev. It is an endemic problem, and deception is still the norm. The reported agricultural yields of the Soviets are rarely so bad as their food purchases on world markets ultimately indicate. And it's not just agricultural numbers that are cooked. The data on Soviet budget deficits and military spending are also untrustworthy. These are underestimated for many reasons, but primarily to deceive credulous bankers and disarmament enthusiasts. London's International Institute for Strategic Studies notes that Moscow's figures on defense expenditures simply omit huge sums devoted to military-related space and nuclear programs. Gorbachev and his people speak often of the terrible costs of the Soviet Union's legacy of lies. But the habit dies hard, and the fact remains: only at the very top of the leadership structure are there people who know the salient truths, which is to say that only at the top are there people who know the salient lies.

These deceptions are attributable not to accountants but to the very essence of the system that rules. Soviet subjects so ruled have now been promised that soon they will be governed by multiparty politics. Yet their response to the vote in the Central Committee on Article Six seemed to be a big yawn. Gorbachev was able to muster a big supporting crowd in advance of the Party meeting, but there was no spontaneous outpouring to cheer his victory afterward. No one really seems to think that whatever political changes are ultimately approved by the organs of the state will much affect the bankrupt economy.

One crucial difference between what's been happening in the Soviet Union and the exhilarating developments elsewhere is that in Prague and Budapest, in Warsaw and Leipzig, there were vestiges of civil society that retained mass loyalties and that formed the basis

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of a spiritual and then explicitly political opposition. In the U.S.S.R. civil society was more successfully expunged. Outside of small groups of intellectuals, there were no independent associations through which the human solidarity needed to sustain dissent could express itself. The people lack the links among themselves that can help them weather austerity and hardship in a purposeful way. There are, of course, vast pockets of resurgent national sentiment with which millions do identify, almost primordially. The Party has shown little inclination to come to terms with this phenomenon that is so devastating to the Marxist pretenses of the regime. Outside of these vibrant ethnic resonances, and outside of the spasms of populist anger expressed at the polls last March (and likely to be repeated in local elections this March), the Soviet population remains politically dormant.

Given how the Party has for seven decades systematically suppressed normal political instincts, there are the practical questions of where an organized opposition is to come from and how it is to sustain itself. We have no hint from Gorbachev or his legislation who will be approved as legitimate alternatives to the Party. And there is his chilling phrase that, whoever they are, they will have to be "committed to the Soviet Constitution and the social system endorsed in this Constitution." The *Washington Post*'s David Remnick cites the stoic dejection of one Muscovite: "After the Communist Party the rest is a vacuum, a wilderness."

The emptiness on the political landscape is no abstraction to those who hope for authentic democratic change. It is also no abstraction to those who hope to retain the Party's functional monopoly on power, if not exactly its formal monopoly. This applies to both the secretary general and his hard-line opponents. Only a few months ago Gorbachev persuaded his parliament to vote down Andrei Sakharov's proposal that the constitutional clause enthroning the Party be dropped. One explanation for why Gorbachev was now willing to put forward precisely the same proposal comes from the Party's ideological secretary, Vadim Medvedev: it was put forward to "prevent a catastrophe," perhaps the utter disinterest of the banks in Soviet cash requirements, perhaps more strikes in the mines. This does not reflect deep commitment to democratic practices. A not inconsistent explanation is that Gorbachev recognizes the intrinsic and structural weakness of any potential opposition. The social seismographers were rightly alarmed by the anarchy around the corner. This was, then, Gorbachev's way to stem the hemorrhaging of authority from the Party—an authority undermined by Gorbachev's five years in power as well as by his predecessors' six decades.

What was especially striking was that when the vote did come in the Central Committee there was just one hand held up against, Boris Yeltsin's solitary "no" to reforms he thinks insincere and timid. What had happened to all of Gorbachev's hard-line opponents, so visible and audible during the proceedings? They too, perhaps, recognized that there may be no sustainable opposition. In the end, like Gorbachev, they were willing to put the Party at risk in order to save it. Then there was the telling power of totalitarian custom: they were casting their ballots with the boss.

In Eastern and Central Europe the democratic bona fides of the engineers of the 1989 revolutions are under severe and exacting popular scrutiny. By the end of this period there may be no party in the region calling itself Communist (though there will still be plenty of Communists). In Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Bulgaria, Party men cling to some of the levers of power. In Romania the revolution is still suspect, because those who overthrew Ceausescu had been his longtime comrades and their methods of imposing order show it. In general, however, what we are watching is the regeneration of dormant political traditions. Except in Czechoslovakia, the attachment to democracy among the people has never been quite consistent. It is therefore astonishing how vibrant the tolerant and pluralist sensibility seems to be, how honest the language of politics, how reasonable the expectations. In the Soviet Union, by contrast, the expectations still are few, the language of politics crimped and false, genuine pluralism an untried, even an unknown thing.

This is the legacy of Soviet communism, still unchallenged by the force of any idea or any organization in its compass. Gorbachev rose through the ranks of this system, in the way the system permits. Nonetheless, it's just possible he realized on his way to the top how deforming the ideology and the Party that enforced it were. He calls the reforms he has now, warily and late, come to sponsor a revolution. We shall know soon enough. But it is a strange revolution, a revolution from the top, a revolution not against the people, but a revolution against the people's diffidence and doubt. It would be nice if it works. Right now, however, what seems to excite the Russians is the new McDonald's in Pushkin Square. Michael Ignatieff, a good socialist who knows both Russia and the United States well, writes in the London *Observer* that "the American way of life has powered its way across Europe to Moscow, not because it is imperial, but because it is egalitarian. . . . McDonald's is nearly the only decent restaurant in Moscow that accepts the ordinary rubles of Soviet citizens and not hard currency. Anyone can eat there, not just the nomenklatura or the tourists. . . . In the strange encounter between American fast food and state socialism, the richest irony is that the service ideology of an American corporation is a more reliable bearer of egalitarian ideals than the socialist humanism" of the Soviets.

Well, maybe the world can count for its egalitarianism on the American multinational corporation. It wouldn't be the worst thing for the corporations or, for that matter, for egalitarianism. The dramatic events that have engaged so many focus, however, on liberty. Many of the exiles in Paris, many of the exiles from communism everywhere, had come to learn the hard way why liberty is important. Liberty, they insist correctly, is won against tyrants from below. Whatever else is happening in the U.S.S.R., it is surely not that. •

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Not another Dubček, but a Djilas of sorts?

GORBACHEV'S INTELLECTUAL ODYSSEY

By Joshua Muravchik

During the late summer and autumn of 1989, the Soviet Union tossed away its empire. Other imperiums had decolonized before, but never so quickly, so dramatically, so completely without warning. The world has followed these events with rapt attention, but their full meaning will take time to absorb. Among the many things that now require radical reinterpretation are the motivations of the one individual most responsible: Mikhail Gorbachev. Could it be that the man thrust to the fore of the world's archetypal totalitarian state is himself a democrat—or on his way to becoming one?

To focus on Gorbachev is not to deny the marvelous parts played by martyrs in Timisoara, marchers in Prague and Leipzig, Free Democrats, Young Democrats, and reform Communists in Budapest, or strikers in the mines, mills, and shipyards of Poland. But Gorbachev's role was pivotal: in creating a new atmosphere that emboldened democrats and sapped ruling parties of their will, in renouncing the "Brezhnev Doctrine" by making clear his unwillingness to use Soviet troops to prop up Eastern European regimes, and even in direct acts of intervention on the side of change.

Why did he do it? Until the last months of 1989, a reasonable interpretation of Gorbachev's foreign policy was that it amounted to another Soviet "peace offensive," the goals of which were, as the outstanding Sovietologist Charles Fairbanks put it, "splitting the United States off from Europe, maintaining Soviet military superiority at . . . less expensive . . . levels, . . . producing economic and technological help from the West." Such a strategy, if successful, would "restore Soviet power and confidence, and hence Soviet imperial ambition." This would explain the tolerance that the Soviet Union had shown during the previous year for reforms in Poland and Hungary. It seemed safe to assume that Gorbachev would not want these reforms to go too far, but a crackdown on Poland, I wrote last August, "would doom [his] domestic reforms." "So far," I concluded, "the alternatives at each step have seemed more costly than allowing the next concession." This process, I hoped, might lead further than Gorbachev had intended, allowing Poland to make its way to democracy piecemeal.

By the end of last summer a Solidarity government was in place in Warsaw, and free elections had been agreed to in Hungary. Events had indeed gone beyond what Gorbachev intended, or what I assumed he intended. Now he must see that their logical outcome was the end of communism in these two countries in the very near term. How would he react? Sure enough, he did not sit still. He raised his hand and . . . toppled the Communist governments of Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.

This is a bit of an exaggeration, of course. He did not directly topple the governments. Their own people, or in Bulgaria's case their own Politburo, did. But without a doubt, he pulled the rug out from under them. In Bulgaria, long the most loyal and least resentful of Soviet satellites, the old dictator Todor Zhivkov was deposed (or decided to resign) after a series of communications between top Soviet and Bulgarian officials. Zhivkov's East German counterpart, Erich Honecker, resigned two weeks after Gorbachev visited Berlin, where he is reported to have urged the Politburo to embark on a course of reform. In Czechoslovakia, as popular demands mounted for the ouster of the hard-line regime that had been installed in the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, Soviet spokesmen tore away its last shred of legitimacy by publicly emphasizing the need for reform. Even in Romania, long the Warsaw Pact member most independent of Soviet influence, it has now been revealed by members of the "Salvation Front" that Soviet officials secretly endorsed the overthrow of Ceausescu weeks in advance.

So much for my earlier analysis that Gorbachev was allowing events to progress toward radical change in Eastern Europe because he had not quite foreseen the implications of his policies. So much, too, for those analyses that saw in his foreign policy a strategy for disarming the West in order to prepare his country to resume its imperial quest with new strength.

The Russians, it has often been observed, are chess

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players. But this was no sacrifice of a pawn in order to take a queen. Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and the rest constitute the very heart of Europe, the very body of the Soviet empire. This was the territory over which World War II was fought, the territory over which the cold war was begun. Far from a pawn, this was practically the whole chessboard! In his New Year's message on Soviet television, Gorbachev called 1989 "the year of the ending of the cold war." He should know. He had set out to end it, just as surely as a predecessor of his, Joseph Stalin, had begun it.

As momentous as the international implications of these acts are, the domestic implications (for the Soviet Union) may be even more profound. The events in Eastern Europe were fully reported by Soviet news media transformed by *glasnost*. Their impact was predictable and immediate. Within the new Soviet legislature, the drive to end the Party's "leading role" gathered new strength, and in the Baltics and other republics, demands for independence intensified. And yet Andrei Grachev, deputy head of the Soviet Communist Party's international department, recently told the *Washington Post* that "Gorbachev had his eyes wide open when he started this, calculating the inevitable effects it would have in Eastern Europe." If so, what is he trying to do?

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV BY TAYLOR JONES FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

I.

Gorbachev says in his book, *Perestroika*, that long before he came to power he concluded that "everything pertaining to the economy, culture, democracy, foreign policy—all spheres—had to be reappraised." The reappraisal was harsh. Not only was the economy stagnant or even contracting; there was an "erosion of . . . moral values." Propaganda about Soviet accomplishments, "real or imagined," had crowded out real discussion of the country's problems, he said. Science, the arts, journalism, and culture had been "emasculated." Corruption was common among officials, as was "disrespect for the law," "servility and glorification," and the "mass distribution of awards." "Socialist justice" was often violated. The country, in short, was "ripe for change."

That being the diagnosis, Gorbachev's prescription has included "a profound structural reorientation of the economy," as he put it recently, "first through the conversion of defense-sector enterprises." In the realm of politics he espouses "building a socialist rule-of-law state," replete with "mechanisms of representative parliamentary democracy" and "a clear separation of the executive and the legislature and the independence of the courts."

Soviet reforms cannot yet be said to have gone this far, but they certainly have taken huge strides. A new legislature has been created, some of whose members were chosen in bona fide elections. Something resembling a loyal opposition, the Inter-Regional Group, now functions within it, airing insistent criticism not only of the status quo but also of the pace of Gorbachev's reforms. David K. Shipler has reported that specific measures are now being developed that would aim to establish judicial independence. He also argues that "the Kremlin has now addressed positively every major human rights grievance on the American agenda." (This does not mean that it has resolved every case.) The 70-year war against organized religion waged by Soviet law and bureaucrats has been called off. Although censorship still formally exists, official publications are filled not only with the heresies that suit the reformist leadership but also with those that discomfit it. In addition, hundreds of unofficial publications—and even an alternative news service—are flourishing. They face obstacles, such as absence or denial of paper and printing equipment, but little repression. In terms of culture, Andrei Sinyavsky, the exiled dissident writer, said after a recent return visit: "It seems as if the very foundations of the Soviet system must be on the point of reeling just from the change in

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the tone and language of today's literature." Even more important, observes Sinyavsky, "The fear that is characteristic of Soviet people has disappeared."

Reforms in the economy have been far less dramatic. (See "What Is To Be Done?" by Richard E. Ericson, page 34.) Some thousands of small businesses—the so-called cooperatives—have been allowed to grow up. An expansion of private agriculture has been encouraged, reportedly without much success. Defense spending has indeed declined, according to American assessments. And the new five-year plan calls for a shift of resources from the industrial to the consumer sector. But the very ritual of adopting a "five-year plan" suggests how limited the change has been, and in content the new plan disappointed both Western and some Soviet economists for its postponement of any major departure toward a market economy.

Though disappointing, Gorbachev's timidity on the economic front is also instructive. If his entire goal consisted of energizing the Soviet economy, as many Western observers have assumed, then what sense would it make to take such daring steps in politics and foreign policy and such hesitant ones in economics? In recent days Gorbachev has sometimes parried questions about the absence so far of any economic improvement by asserting that the political changes he has wrought are values in themselves. "We are underestimating the results of *perestroika*," he said. "It is true that it has not brought us economic results as a whole, but it has provided freedom of expression and creativity and freedoms in the political sphere. Only recently we all said that we had been suffocating under paralyzed ideas and deeds. Didn't we dream of freedom as the most cherished thing?"

Until February's Central Committee meeting, Gorbachev's political reforms had stopped short of one critical barrier—the one-party state. As recently as a year ago, he was quoted as having called the idea of multiple parties "rubbish." Writing in *Pravda* in November Gorbachev softened his tone, claiming only that "at the current complex stage . . . the difficult tasks of *perestroika* dictate the expedience of retaining the one-party system." Under pressure from the Inter-Regional Group in the legislature and national movements in the Baltics, he gave further ground during his January visit to Lithuania. "I don't see a tragedy in a multiparty system," he said. In his address to the Central Committee he stated, "The Soviet Communist Party . . . intends to struggle for the status of the ruling party. But it will do so strictly within the framework of the democratic process by giving up any legal and political advantages." The significance of this issue has been summed up by Yugoslavia's Milovan Djilas: "The essence of any communist system is the monopolistic rule of society by the Communist Party." Ending that monopoly has been tantamount to revolution in Eastern Europe and would be so, too, in the Soviet Union.

Revolution, however, is exactly what Gorbachev says he wants. "*Perestroika* is a revolution," he says. It is not an end in itself but "a historically transitional period." Its goal is to create "a qualitatively new state." "We're moving from one . . . system of state and social institutions to another. . . . We have to change everything."

What can this mean? In a Marxist context, once socialism has been attained—as Gorbachev, like his predecessors, repeatedly proclaimed has happened in the U.S.S.R.—how can there be a revolution? Gorbachev's words bear no resemblance to the familiar Soviet palaver about transitions from "socialism" to "advanced socialism" to "communism." Those declamations—absurd even from the standpoint of Marxist theoretics—have generally been spoken in a rhetoric of bombast and self-congratulation. Gorbachev's rhetoric is just the opposite—about failures and the urgency of changing the "system." But to what can the "system" be changed? Back to capitalism? That, of course, is exactly what he is accused of wanting by conservatives within the U.S.S.R. and other Communist countries. Gorbachev's reply is vehement: *I am a communist, a convinced communist. For some, that may be a fantasy, but for me it is my main goal.*

II.

This statement, I believe, holds the key to understanding Gorbachev. For a convinced communist, the contrast between the Marxist ideal and Soviet reality must be troubling indeed, as we know it has been for many. Those who are sufficiently cynical or cowardly may simply avert their gaze. Others grow disillusioned. But for those who do not want to relinquish their ideals or ignore the reality, awakening to this contradiction marks the beginning of an intellectual journey. This journey has led some to conservatism, others to liberalism or social democracy, still others to religious awakening or away from politics altogether. But whatever the ultimate destiny, most have modified their views little by little, rather than in a single leap. For Marxists, deeply ingrained habits of thought require a theoretical reconciliation of doctrine with observation. The natural course is to incorporate as much change in the construct as is necessary to allow it to regain its coherence, but no more. When the new theory confronts additional unassimilable experience, further modifications are required, and the intellectual odyssey continues.

The American communist movement produced a few notable figures who traveled this path. Jay Lovestone was one. The general secretary of the Communist Party, USA, for a time in the 1920s, Lovestone was ousted by order of the Kremlin. Together with a few hundred devotees, Lovestone founded his own Communist Party, claiming to be the sole embodiment of the true faith. After years of evolution, he and a group of co-thinkers became the architects of the anti-Communist foreign policy of the American labor movement. Another former Communist leader, Max Shachtman, followed Trotsky out of the official Communist Party and later led his band of followers out of the

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official Trotskyist movement and into one of their own. Eventually they joined up with the original Socialist Party of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas, where Shachtman furthered his reputation as a spellbinding anti-Communist orator.

Similar figures have emerged from the Communist movements of many other countries but very few from ruling Communist parties. True, splits occurred between Stalin on the one hand and Trotsky, Bukharin, and other Bolshevik leaders on the other, but those struggles had less to do with ideas than with power. In the relatively brief time before Stalin had each of them killed, none of the losers evolved very far beyond the idea that he himself, rather than Stalin, deserved to lead the movement.

The most important leader of a ruling Communist Party ever to complete a true intellectual odyssey was Milovan Djilas. By the time the Communists took power in Yugoslavia at the end of World War II, Djilas, though still in his 30s, ranked near the top of the Party hierarchy; many saw him as Tito's heir apparent. An impassioned believer, Djilas had written in 1942, "It is a great honor to live in the era of Stalin." Yet when Tito's split with Stalin came in 1948, Djilas was the main spokesman for the Yugoslavs. The conflict arose, he explained, because the Yugoslavs were good Communists while the Soviets had become bureaucrats. Over the next five years, however, Djilas began to observe the same bureaucratism in Yugoslavia. A brave and principled man, Djilas expounded his views in the Party press until Tito had him shut out and then jailed. Djilas was guilty of "advocating democracy at any price," explained Tito.

In 1957 Djilas, then in prison, published *The New Class*, a landmark critique of communism written from a Marxist perspective. The villain in the book was Lenin, who was condemned by Djilas for having transformed the democratic and humanistic ideas of Marx into something dogmatic and dictatorial. Though the book made him famous in the West and remains the work for which he is best known, it was not the end of his odyssey. During a second prison term in the 1960s Djilas reconsidered his exoneration of Marx and traced the roots of Stalinism back through Lenin to Marx's ideological rigidity, utopianism, and scientific pretensions. In his 1969 book *The Unperfect Society*, Djilas asked rhetorically about Communist rulers: "How could they think or act otherwise when they have been named by a higher power, which they call history, to establish the Kingdom of Heaven in this sinful world?" Djilas concluded his quest as a democrat, a "humanist"—above all, an opponent of dogma and ideology. (Djilas, now in his 70s, continues to speak and write from his home in Belgrade.)

ИЗВЕСТИЯ СОВЕТОВ НАРОДНЫХ ДЕПУТАТОВ СССР

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ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ СООБЩЕНИЕ
о Пленуме Центрального Комитета
Коммунистической партии Советского Союза

ДОКЛАД М. С. ГОРБАЧЕВА
на Пленуме Центрального Комитета КПСС
5 февраля 1990 года

С ДОЗИМЕТРОМ ВОКРУГ «МИРА»

IZVESTIA, FEBRUARY 6, 1990, PAGE ONE

Only a few other leaders of ruling Communist parties have rebelled against Communist practice or orthodoxy. Imre Nagy, Communist leader of Hungary during its 1956 revolt, and Alexander Dubček, leader of the 1968 Prague Spring, are the two striking examples. In both cases, the break was spurred by nationalist feelings, presiding as both men did over Communist systems that were synonymous with Soviet domination of their countries. How Nagy's thinking might have developed we will never know, as the Soviet invaders had him killed. Dubček retired to obscurity for 21 years, and such ideas as he may have had in that time have yet to be revealed.

III.

Gorbachev has now embraced as his own the slogan of Dubček's Prague Spring: "Socialism with a human face." But what he means by this remains unclear, and it may be unclear to Gorbachev himself because his most important forerunner may not be Dubček. It may be Djilas. Gorbachev, the

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self-proclaimed true-believing communist, is wrestling with the contrast between theory and reality. He seems to have embarked on an intellectual odyssey of his own.

Djilas was asked about the analogy in an interview with George Urban in *Encounter* and brushed it aside. He said that Gorbachev's "attempt to reform the system is not inspired by some noble realization that the system is unjust or poorly regarded abroad, but by [having] come to realize . . . that communism doesn't work." But Gorbachev claims the opposite. He writes, "The ideas of *perestroika* have been prompted not just by pragmatic interests and considerations but also by our troubled conscience, by the indomitable commitment to ideals which we inherited from the Revolution, and as a result of a theoretical quest." Despite his doubts, Djilas lends credence to Gorbachev's version by opining that "Gorbachev . . . strikes me as a true believer."

Is it plausible that a man of true belief could emerge from this cruel and cynical system? Could this man be the same one who was described admiringly by a Politburo colleague as having "teeth of steel"? We have never understood well the relationship between belief and primal selfish interest in the motivations of Communist leaders, but we know that both have been present in varying degrees in different individuals. The same may be said in more general terms about politicians everywhere. Pragmatism and idealism are polar opposites as abstractions, but few politicians are ruled entirely by one or the other. Most combine elements of both. And so may Gorbachev.

In the same vein, Djilas makes too much of a dichotomy between disillusionment with the system's failure and disillusionment with its injustice. When Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze announces that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a criminal undertaking, it is fair to wonder whether he would have reached that conclusion had the invasion been a quick success. (Just as fewer Americans would have seen the war in Vietnam as "immoral" had it not worn on so futilely.) But it is less fair to doubt that he means what he says. Why else would he say it? In logic, "success" and "right" are two entirely distinct criteria. But in the human psyche, they are often not so distinct. Failure spurs us to reconsider our acts, first from the viewpoint of their effectiveness but often also from the viewpoint of their propriety. Gorbachev and other Soviets today project a sense that their system is a failure in a broad and diffuse way—as, after all, it is. They speak repeatedly of wanting to have a "normal" or "civilized" country. It is likely they mean by this both a country where television sets don't explode and one where the history texts are not filled with lies. This is far from a contradiction.

Gorbachev's odyssey began with tiny steps. At first he sought merely to discourage drunkenness, to replace deadwood in the bureaucracy, and to exhort the work force to greater productivity. But as such palliatives proved useless, his evolution has continued and even accelerated. "He becomes more radical," observes *Time* magazine about its Man of the Decade. "The sweeping changes he has instigated this past year . . . would shock not only the late Andrei Gromyko, who nominated Gorbachev for the general secretaryship in 1985, but the Gorbachev of five years ago as well."

However radical the changes and much of the rhetoric, Gorbachev still insists again and again that his goal is to "renew socialism," not to abolish it. But what does "socialism" mean? Marx believed that he had discovered "scientific socialism" because he thought that the majority—the proletariat—would make the revolution that would usher in utopia. That, he said, was "the riddle of history solved." But the proletariat refused to play its assigned role, bringing on, by the end of the 19th century, a crisis in doctrine.

One wing of the Marxist world, led by Karl Kautsky, stayed with the majoritarian content of Marxism and abandoned the revolutionary content. If the workers were skeptical of utopia and shied away from revolution, then these Marxists would seek to rally the workers through the electoral process to a program of melioration known as social democracy. Not without reason, these social democrats were denounced by the other wing of Marxism for wanting to reform capitalism rather than replace it. This second wing was led by Lenin, and it chose the revolutionary content over the majoritarian. Since the workers would not make the revolution, the vanguard party would do it in their name in order to assure the complete abolition of capitalism. This program became known as communism, and it was denounced by social democrats—understandably—for negating democracy.

Gorbachev, of course, comes out of the Communist wing of Marxism, and he frequently invokes the name of Lenin. But the thrust of a great deal of his thinking and commentary contradicts the essence of Leninism. In contrast to Lenin, who substituted the vanguard for the mass, Gorbachev says that he wants to restore "the original meaning of the concept of 'socialism,' above all, as an ideological and political movement of the masses, a grass-roots movement." And he stresses that "the essence of *perestroika* lies in the fact that *it unites socialism with democracy*." (His emphasis.) This is extraordinary in that Communists have always insisted that their system is already democratic. For them, the "bourgeois" or "formal" democracy of the capitalist world was a sham. But Gorbachev made nonsense of this Leninist shibboleth when he wrote in *Perestroika*, "We know today that we would have been able to avoid many . . . difficulties if the democratic process had developed normally in our country." And if this left any doubt about his break with Communist tradition, he wrote in *Pravda* last fall, "We oppose the rejection . . . of the formal principles of democracy, since a rule-of-law state of necessity embodies these principles," indicating that he meant "parliamentary democracy" and a Jeffersonian separation of powers.

In short, in at least part of his thinking, Gorbachev

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has worked his way back beyond a rejection of Stalin to a rejection of Lenin, although he does not say so. And other parts of his thinking, although he may not recognize it, have carried him even further, toward a rejection of Marx. In *Perestroika* he wrote, "Socialism is the living creativity of the masses . . . not an a priori theoretical scheme." He credited this insight to Lenin, but it is more characteristic of the thinking of Eduard Bernstein, the first Marxist "revisionist," who proclaimed, "The ultimate aim . . . is nothing, but the movement is everything." But if socialism is only a direction, not a model, then what is the justification for replacing capitalism rather than reforming it? In *Pravda* Gorbachev again carried this further, lamenting the Communist past when "our efforts were focused on describing some kind of ideal 'model' of the future, to which changes in society were tailored. An abstract schema was imposed on reality [that] led to dogmatism, ideological brutality, narrow-mindedness, self-deception, and tyranny over people and history." Gorbachev credited this insight to Marx, but it is redolent of Djilas—and not the Marxist Djilas of the 1950s but the anti-Marxist Djilas of the 1960s, warning against utopianism and historicism.

In addition, Gorbachev has increasingly referred to "the priority . . . of all-human values over the interests of one or another class." These "all-human" values, he has said at various times, include "democracy and freedom," "peace, security," and "the possibility for every people to determine their destiny." Gorbachev calls this "an idea of tremendous depth," and characteristically he attributes it to Lenin. Whatever words of Lenin's Gorbachev may have in mind, the idea cuts against the grain not only of Leninism but of Marxism too. In the first sentence of the first chapter of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Their entire philosophy followed from that. If now we discover that the most important values and issues transcend class, then Marxism is, ipso facto, out the window.

Gorbachev's evolution seems so far to have brought him to some form of "democratic socialism." ("We now more clearly visualize the goal that we strive to attain," he said in his New Year's message, ". . . a humane, democratic socialism.") If so, he will soon confront, as others have, the fact that "democratic socialism" is a chimera—if democratic socialism is understood to mean a system that is different in kind and not in degree from democratic capitalism. The problem is not, as some claim, that the two concepts, democracy and socialism, are intrinsically incompatible. The problem is that where the people are sovereign, they never choose socialism. They may choose the welfare state—and to do that, they may elect parties calling themselves socialist. More likely, they will oscillate between strengthening the social safety net and reducing taxes. But they never opt against basic economic freedom, that is, capitalism. Thus Gorbachev will ultimately revisit the same dilemma that Kautsky and Lenin's generation faced: to choose between democracy and socialism.

It is impossible to say where Gorbachev's odyssey will end. And we can't be sure how far it has already gone. Are the invocations of Lenin and Marx heartfelt or camouflage? In that famous article in *Daedalus* the pseudonymous author "Z" complains that "the expedients of *perestroika* and *glasnost* . . . are only pale substitutes for the market and democracy," and so they may be. But Z also argues that in deference to the salience of pride, "The West's aim should be to encourage the change of Soviet realities, while leaving the old labels intact." Might this not be what Gorbachev is already doing?

Whether it is or not, we cannot assume that Gorbachev's odyssey is synonymous with the course of the Soviet Union. He could, of course, die or lose power. His reforms could be stymied by forces more conservative than he is or overtaken by ones more progressive. For these reasons Paul Nitze is justified in cautioning against tying American policy "too closely to a single individual." But we also ought not to undervalue Gorbachev's importance. Nitze takes encouragement from the belief that any successor to Gorbachev "will have to adjust to the same dramatic changes that have taken place in the world scene over the last few months." Let us then neither forget that those changes were largely precipitated by Gorbachev nor lightly discard the hope that he may precipitate more. Indeed, it was not many weeks after Nitze penned his caution that Gorbachev orchestrated the Central Committee's momentous renunciation of the Communist Party's monopoly of power. Gorbachev, like all mortals, will not last forever. But just as Nitze is right when he suggests that the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe has become irreversible, the momentum of change under Gorbachev's aegis in the Soviet Union itself may soon carry it beyond a point of no return as well.

The interpretation of Gorbachev put forth here is necessarily speculative. However hopeful the changes in the Soviet Union, the last thing the United States should do in response is disarm, except in the most prudent and stable bilateral agreements or in response to actual, observable reductions on the Soviet side. We should, however, do everything in our power that is not reckless to support and deepen *glasnost* and *perestroika*. In addition, we should continue to seek dialogue with Gorbachev, not merely about trade and missiles but about values and principles, in the hope of furthering his evolution. Our natural allies in this process are democratic-minded Soviet citizens who edit independent publications, serve in the parliamentary Inter-Regional Group, and the like. By their criticisms, they are beckoning Gorbachev to the logical conclusion of his "new thinking." With their help and prodding—and ours—he may yet complete his odyssey by sailing the Soviet ship of state safely beyond the grotesque clutches of Leninism and Marxism to the friendly port of democracy and freedom. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Woman in the Case

So much for promises. Karel Reisz directed **Everybody Wins** (Orion), Arthur Miller wrote it. Reisz, in his spotty career, has at least directed *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Arthur Miller is, for better and worse, Arthur Miller. The combination promises: the result disappoints. *Everybody Wins* is not a stupidly bad film, like *The War of the Roses*; it seems a series of jottings for a film that, if everything had turned out right, might have been mediocre.

In a small New England city, Nick Nolte is a private eye. Debra Winger is an oddball—she turns out to be a hooker—who engages him to prove the innocence of a young man now in prison for murder. Also attendant are themes of corruption in high places and devil worship in a garage. Such trifles as why Nolte accepts the job and who is paying him and why Winger isn't stopped by the bad guys from pursuing the case—these are not examined. But then Miller's interest in the whole subject is unexplained. The dialogue is occasionally touched by his herniated poetics: Nolte says of the case at one point: "It's like chasing feathers in a tornado." Reisz's direction is, with the exception noted below, relentlessly nondescript.

But the film is worth noting—remembering—for one element. The character of the hooker, named Angela Crispini, is written with insight and color. In the past Miller has shown empathy for women on the edge of neurosis and worse, tugged there by a sexual power that they almost dislike yet are proud of possessing, women who are like revolving ballroom colored lights—what you see is what they happen to be at the moment. (Schizophrenia seems too precise a word.) These women—the role that Marilyn Monroe played in *The Misfits*, the role based on Marilyn Monroe in *After the Fall*—stand quite apart from most of Miller's other characters, who are like leftovers from '30s allegiances. (The protagonist of *A View from the Bridge* had to be a longshoreman to show that, though sexual agonies were the theme, Miller hadn't forgotten the working man.)

Angela Crispini is not interchangeable with those Monroe roles, but she is sister to them. She brims with enthusiasm, hurts, fears, deceptions, demands, sexual hunger and sexual whip-cracking—pathetic even while she is duplicitous. She overshadows Nolte, who gives one of his stolid, side-of-beef performances in an unrealized part. Angela belongs in a cogent screenplay. Here she is figuratively a vivid portrait hanging in a gallery, not a character in a drama good enough for her.

This is all the more pitiful because of Debra Winger's excellent acting, mercurial yet strong. No doubt with Reisz's help, she has explored the woman intuitively and has found all the physical and vocal means—the teasing, pragmatic madness—to bring Angela to life. Winger does fine work, but it seems to be happening somewhere in space, devoid of the film that ought to house it.

Oh, the number of performances like that—fine work in footling films: Peter O'Toole in *Brotherly Love*, Richard Burton in *Staircase*, Fredric March in *The Young Doctors*, Jane Fonda in *The Morning After*, Jessica Lange in *Music Box*, to name a random few that come first to mind. The critic is in a cleft stick about such films. It's hard to urge any except those specifically interested in the art of acting (who once were the majority of the theatergoing public) to see a poor film just for a performance in it. Still, what a waste.

Winger will also have the added bitterness, I'm sure, of seeing her performance ignored when prize-giving time comes around.

Any time that Coline Serreau decides to give up filmmaking, which I trust she won't, she could—just by relocating her instincts—become a top-class pastry chef. Her last film was *Three Men and a Cradle* (remade in the United States as *Three Men and a Baby*), the adventures of three high-living Parisian bachelors who suddenly find themselves responsible for an infant. Immediately we knew we were in for a confection, and Serreau served it up, fluffy and light, with dexterity. I missed—deliberately—the Hollywood version. Who needs pastry réchauffé? But I went with my cinematic sweet tooth at the ready to Serreau's latest, **Mama, There's a Man in Your Bed** (Miramax).

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cinema Paradiso. *A film theater in a Sicilian town and the magic it works on a small boy and his future. Warm feelings, à la Fellini, about community and romance. (Reviewed 2/19/90)* **Enemies, A Love Story.** *A superb cast, well directed by Paul Mazursky (who also is in it), makes this screen version of I. B. Singer's novel a treat. Amorous intrigues of four Nazi survivors in New York interlace past horror with present farce-drama. (1/1/90)* **Flashback.** *A straight-laced young FBI agent escorts a '60s radical leader back to jail. Do they ever arrive? See this well-made, credible-enough comedy for the answer(s)—and for some jabs at present-day inertia. (2/19/90)* **Glory.** *Outstanding direction by Edward Zwick, splendid performances (except from Matthew Broderick) make this epic about a black regiment in the Civil War monumentally large and stirring. The implications (about the present) are bitter, the execution fine. (1/8&15/90)* **—SK**

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The French title, *Romuald et Juliette*, is better, but in fact the U. S. title, though a wee bit less subtle, is not farfetched. Serreau, as usual, wrote her own screenplay—about the encounters of two dissimilar people. Romuald is the CEO of a big yogurt manufacturing company with offices in Paris. He is married and has two teenage children. Juliette is the hefty black woman who cleans the Paris office. She has five children, teenage to small, by five husbands, is currently divorced and is tranquil about it.

Some under-officers of Romuald's company make various plots to unseat him and replace him. Juliette, no dummy, hears bits and fragments of telephone conversations after-hours and finds odd bits of paper in the wastebaskets. With instinct and intelligence, she figures out what's going on. She likes Romuald, who has always been courteous to her (the others have not), and she alerts him to his business dangers—also to an affair that his wife is having.

At first incredulous, Romuald then sees the plots begin to take shape, heeds Juliette's warnings, and engages in battle. However, he gets in such deep trouble that he has to hide out for a time, and he does so in her small apartment with her five children in a cheap building in a remote part of Paris. Of course he discovers the vitality and love in this home. Of course he is charmed by the children. Of course he eventually wins his business and personal battles.

That's not where it ends. Serreau has a topping for her *gâteau* that suits it nicely.

The dialogue, to judge by subtitles, is bright. Serreau's directing—her sense of pace, her knowledge of when to linger and when to do a kind of fast-forward—is deft. Daniel Auteuil, who was gnarled as the homely young man in *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Springs*, is agile and affecting as Romuald. A woman named Firmine Richard makes her professional debut as Juliette. A native of the Antilles, she had previously acted only in some school plays. It's a compliment to Serreau, as well as to the immensely genial Richard, to say that the latter gives the role all that it needs and a generous helping more—of calm strength and quiet humor.

If Hollywood feels that the American public is ready for a comedy about interracial romance, deals are probably already in the works to remake this film with Whoopi Goldberg. Even if that's the case, why not see the original?

Come back, Bette Midler.

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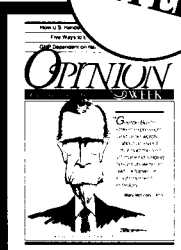

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But her last film, *Beaches*, and her latest, **Stella** (Touchstone), are mainline tearjerkers. Not only that, the women she portrays basically contravene the various freedoms her comic work implied. In *Stella*, a remake of that weary weepy *Stella Dallas*, she tries frantically to scoop up a little comedy as she floats down a stream of tears, but it's no use.

Once she was very close to being a Brechtian epic actor. In fact, she once announced plans for a film on the life of Lotte Lenya. Where is it? Where is *anything* other than her two latest films? They're not only dreadful in themselves, they debase her talent.

"Tragedy tomorrow, comedy tonight," sang Zero Mostel in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Formerly divine Miss M., please heed. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Actors Directing Actors

Joseph Papp's Shakespeare Marathon has had its successes and will undoubtedly experience more, but it has hit a kind of nadir with the recent New York Public Theater production of **Macbeth**. *Macbeth* is almost always ill-fated, which is why actors believe that identifying it by name, rather than by nationality as the "Scottish play," is only slightly less portentous than whistling in the dressing room. It's not just that *Macbeth* productions are often accompanied by coronaries, broken limbs, falling flats, earthquakes, and other "dire combustion and confused events"; *Macbeth*'s history includes many artistic as well as natural catastrophes. The play is certainly a traditional butt of the most scathing criticism. I enjoyed exercising my own vocabulary of invective some years back with Nicol Williamson's ham-handed, pork-footed effort at Circle in the Square and Sarah Caldwell's miscarriage at Lincoln Center, and took some buckshot from my critical colleagues in turn when I made the mistake of directing the play myself.

Partly in fear of further retribution (we imprudently intend to produce *Macbeth* again next season), I'll try to resist the temptation to murder the sleep of the current perpetrators. But it occurs to me that the Papp version was doomed from the start for the same reason that *Twelfth Night* failed last summer and that the projected *Hamlet* with Kevin Kline, who is directing the play himself, faces such worrisome prospects. In each case, they have been staged by actors or acting coaches with little or no directing experience.

I don't mean to say that actors are incapable of supervising classical performance. John Gielgud's *Cherry Orchard* still sits in my memory as among the most sensitive Chekhov productions I've ever seen. Laurence Olivier's work at the Old Vic, particularly his majestic, almost Elizabethan version of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, surely gave his company its special stamp; and, of course, his Shakespeare movies produced some of the finest performances and—in the case of *Henry V*—most stunning visual concepts available on film. Kenneth Branagh's movie of *Henry V*—so different from Olivier's medieval montages and chauvinist heroics, yet so powerful in its remorseless depiction of the deadening impact of war on human personality—was also the work of an actor.

Yet all of these artists had classical training and experience, not to mention the opportunity to exercise their advantages in a healthy theater. To his credit, Papp is trying to create the same conditions here, enticing major actors from Hollywood to perform in Shakespeare. But Shakespeare is not fast food, and it's merely one more example of our passion for instant culture to expect people to materialize overnight into an acting company when most of them have never met before, even if some can list classical roles on their résumés. It's not just that Hollywood offers no training in verse speaking. An even greater obstacle to integrated Shakespeare performance is that performing in movies increases the actor's traditional suspicion toward directors. If on stage the actor feels manipulated for the director's conceptual purposes, imagine how he feels in the movies, where he is never in complete control of his performance, where scenes are filmed out of sequence, and where carefully prepared work can be chopped or cut or even redubbed according to a director's whim.

For that reason, I suspect, Papp manages to attract stars to his Shakespeare Marathon partly through assurances of a nurturing atmosphere and artistic autonomy. And who can understand the personal needs of the actor better than a director who is an actor himself—or, at least, an actor's coach? But as Harold Guskin demonstrated in the course of squiring Jeff Goldblum and Michelle Pfeiffer through the thickets of *Twelfth Night*, even the best actors need something more than cosseting, flattery, and personal counseling. They need a firm directorial hand. Lee Strasberg proved this, too, when, in his preposterous production of *Three Sisters*, he let the most luminous stars of the Actors Studio indulge their celebrated idiosyncrasies. If *Three Sisters* was considered the standard of our classical acting when it opened to critical raspberries in London in 1965, it's no wonder that no American repertory company has been invited there since.

Richard Jordan, the actor who directed *Macbeth*, is a cut above Strasberg and Guskin. He is an intelligent man who periodically returns to the stage, and who has some experience in staging modern plays, but the problems with this production are largely his doing. For once, most of the cast is classically trained. So is Jordan—as an actor. Why then is this *Macbeth* so tepid and so lifeless?

I must conclude that Jordan has pressed virtually nobody associated with this production beyond the minimal level of his or her talents, a conclusion that is early confirmed by John Conklin's setting. Since Conklin is one of our most accomplished stage designers, this set is an aberration. Consisting of a floor of pine planks, backed by a wall flecked with blood stains, the space represents neither a bare platform nor a metaphorical statement, so the play comes off like a staged reading. The actors, doubling as stagehands, carry the furniture in and out laboriously. The weird sisters, continually reinforced by reverb acoustics and recorded thunder, play on triangles and tambourines, while toting a wagon that might have been rented from a suburban high school production of *Mother Courage*.

The banquet scene is played around a picnic table borrowed from a rest stop off the Thruway. Macbeth's throne is an outsize baby's high chair. The boiling caldron contains a hallucinogenic brew that acts on him like magic mushrooms. The apparitions he sees appear in a puppet show, conducted from the witch wagon, that wouldn't increase his heart rate, much less sear his eyeballs. Macbeth is overcome by Macduff when he gets a cramp in his leg. The clumsy battles are fought, amid a lot of yelling and trumpet blasts, right under the noses of the audience; yet Macbeth's death is not visible.

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Nor is his severed head, which has been severed only from the production.

This is poor theater in all senses of the phrase, but one could forgive the penury of the circumstances were there the slightest hint of boldness in the performance or resolution in the staging. Raul Julia is invariably a strong presence on stage and screen, but he plays Macbeth like a man with a headache. He shows no anguish or despair, simply discomfort; his sleepy eyes and sardonic smile are those of an ironist, not a tragic sufferer. Julia reads his soliloquies like lectures to an anatomy class. The dagger speech costs him nothing. In a play riddled with occultism and superstition, the title character seems like a cynic and a secularist.

Because Julia's beard is grizzled since we saw him last, he also seems a bit advanced in age for Melinda Mullins's unripened Lady Macbeth. There's some heat in the relationship between this middle-aged man and his young wife, but the passion is largely uxorious. Little of it spills over into the conspiracy scene. The couple plot Duncan's death like they're organizing a dinner party, with the wife displaying petulance over the placement of the guests and the arrangement of the silver; after Macbeth has done the bloody deed, she handles the daggers like a pair of unwashed carving knives. Mullins speaks her role as if she's doing an exercise in scene study. There's no depth in her, no size; her voice is disembodied when it should issue from her internal organs. In the production's single interpolation, Mullins's Lady Macbeth commits hara-kiri before her husband's eyes with a knife; curiously, he fails to notice her prostrate body until it's time for his next speech ("Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow").

The other roles are also played by able actors performing below the level of their gifts. I can say this with some authority since a number have acted with my company. With the exception of Daniel von Bargen's Ross, which would be a forceful contribution to any *Macbeth* production, almost everyone seems at sea or resting on familiar, comfortable habits. William Converse-Roberts's Macduff is stalwart and handsome, but occasionally given to harsh rant. Harriet Harris has genuine emotional strength, but her somewhat neurasthenic Lady Macduff could double as a Tennessee Williams heroine. The gifted Harry S. Murphy turns the Porter into stock comedy, losing his pants, bumping into posts, engaging in so much stage business that he fails to build a character. Mark Hammer, more successful as the Doctor, plays Duncan like Father Christmas ringing a bell in front of Harrod's. Larry Bryggman's Banquo is more nerd than nobleman, a lamebrain Thane.

A less congenial director might have pressured, cajoled, harassed, tickled, wheedled, intimidated, frightened, irritated, encouraged, inspired these actors beyond the easily accessed limits of their known gifts. But Jordan, possibly in consequence of his own bad experience with intrusive directors, has merely contented himself with recruiting a good cast and leaving them to their own devices. The result is another in a long line of calamitous *Macbeth*s against which critics can aim their artillery and I, abandoning all good intentions, seem to have unmuzzled my howitzers as well. •

Edward Rothstein on Music

Jolly Roger and the Musical Past

I.

A tale from the annals of authenticity: according to Stravinsky, the celebrated actor Mounet-Sully was once rehearsing a medieval play at the Comédie Française. The text called for the actor to swear an oath on an old Bible, but during rehearsals it was suggested that he use a telephone directory instead. "The script calls for an old Bible," roared Mounet-Sully. "Get me an old Bible!" The director rushed to his library to find a magnificent old edition of the two testaments, and triumphantly brought it to the actor. "Here you are, mon cher Doyen," the director proclaimed, "a 15th-century edition. . . ." "Fifteenth century!" said Mounet-Sully. "But then at that time it was brand new!"

I am not sure what tome would have satisfied the dramatic orthodoxy of Mounet-Sully, but we may be thankful that this version of verisimilitude never had a chance to dominate the stage as it has musical life. Of course, historical dramas are sometimes stocked full of authentic props from earlier centuries, each given the appropriate sheen of age; even the modern technology of stagecraft has been shunned for candlelight and grinding stage gears. (Ingmar Bergman created such a stage for his film of *The Magic Flute*.) But no one has yet proposed casting a prepubescent boy in the role of Lady Macbeth as was the custom of Shakespeare's time, nor has there been any lobbying for the old practice of having prostitutes available for patrons in the boxes.

But music—at least as far as performance is concerned—is another story. Fifteenth-century costume is often de rigueur for groups performing 15th-century compositions. Concerts of early music are almost sentimental in their extramusical evocation of the practices of earlier periods; and applause seems too modern a response to the appearance of troubadours or jongleurs. Hardly a surviving sackbut or shawm has remained untouched: the relics in museums are constantly being used as models for contemporary reproductions. Early-music manufacturing industries have sprung up around gut strings and baroque bows and fortepianos. In Europe boy sopranos have, in recent decades, been in unusual demand, singing soprano roles taken in less authentic times by women.

And while passions for historical performance were once bounded by the late Baroque period, they are now extending well into the 19th century. The modern instruments that once so proudly formed the heart of the orchestra are gradually being replaced during performances of older music by "instruments of the period." Since all orchestral music is "older" in our peculiar musical world, when should anything contemporary be used? Scholarly advice is now essential. How many players were at the first performance? What was the tuning pitch? How were phrase marks executed? How were the performers seated?

Christopher Hogwood is the most famous of the restorationers. His recordings (with the Academy of Ancient Music) reportedly outsell Pavarotti's; aside from the Baroque repertory, he has turned attention to the un-ancient Mozart and Beethoven symphonies. The most ambitious and extraordinary recording project of recent decades has been the complete edition of the Bach cantatas ("*mit Originalinstrumenten*"), conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt—a 45-volume set on Teldec packaged, in LP versions at least, with complete scores. And most remarkably, perhaps, one of the best-selling conductors of the Beethoven symphonies is an authentician. In a few short years Roger Norrington has emerged

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from obscurity to stardom. Along with Hogwood and Frans Bruggen, he has pushed the ideology of authenticity well into the 19th century. This has been a crucial move, since the rejection of the 19th-century repertory, its culture, and its performance practice was the defining characteristic of the authenticity movement when it began at the turn of this century.

The achievements of this movement hardly need recounting, so thoroughly has it transformed our tastes. In a musical universe that is essentially built around the repetition of 19th-century repertory, the movement of "authenticity" has opened vast regions of sound once as lost to our ears as the music of our own time. It has given us performances of medieval plainchant, Renaissance madrigals, and Baroque trio sonatas that are, if not identical to those that graced earlier eras, surely their technical and expressive equals. Early instruments have introduced a transparency of sound that reveals musical texture—a nappy, burnished sound to strings that gives them vocal intimacy. Timbre has a lot to do with how an ensemble is "voiced"—what is heard and what is submerged—and it even affects the character of the phrasing. Properly played, these instruments sound less "objective" than modern instruments, less intent on display, more able to suggest the formal gestures of premodern inner life.

The authenticity movement has also changed our sense of musical style. It would be unthinkable—at least unconvincing to musically educated ears—to perform Bach's B Minor Mass with 600 chorus members, as was done in 1885. (One historian and performer, Joshua Rifkin, has even argued that no more than one singer should be used per voice in Bach's choral works, shrinking the 600 voices down to a mere four.) It is clear that we hear Baroque music in a different way than the last generation did. The "revival" of Baroque in the 1950s was best represented by the Italian string group I Musici, who still perform Vivaldi as they did then: phrasings tend to arch as in Romantic music; vibrato is insistent and regularly used; tempi are metrically rigid, except for ritards at cadences. That style now seems "old-fashioned," or artificially modern.

We are now used to thinking of Baroque music as more involved with gesture and breath, with more freedom in note values, more attention to the subsidiary pulses in dance movements; we hear it, that is, as more expressive of individuals than institutions. Most influential in this change in taste have been performers from the Netherlands, where there has been a renaissance of early music performers—Gustav Leonhardt, Bruggen, Ton Koopman, the Kuijken brothers, and various ensembles. They have defined a distinct "authentic" style that is never self-indulgent, is always restrained, but focuses on the shapes of individual notes and phrases, creating exquisitely crafted sighs and swells. These interpreters, along with such expressive players as Malcolm Bilson and John Eliot Gardiner, now form a roster of the most talented and dedicated musicians playing today, when much of the rest of musical life centers on ersatz virtuosity and empty repetition. We have come a long way since Thomas Beecham said that the harpsichord "sounds like two skeletons copulating on a tin roof."

But the achievements of "authenticity" should not blind us to the extraordinary peculiarity of this movement. In a collection of essays—*Authenticity and Early Music*, edited by Nicholas Kenyon—unusual for its intelligence and scope, Howard Mayer Brown argues that the entire notion of authenticity is distinctly contemporary: it was never an issue for any previous age how precisely to re-create the works of a still earlier age. Interest in the works of eras past is not new, of course, but never before has "authenticity" been an ideology of performance as it is today.

Just how unusual it is becomes clear when we look at what has been done in the name of "authenticity." The doctrine itself maintains that in order to understand and to appreciate a composition, it should be performed as the composer first heard it or imagined it. This project is not as elementary as it seems. Music gives us a series of signs on paper, and an oral tradition for interpreting those signs. But what if we are dealing with musical runes whose precise meaning is lost?

It turns out that guesses and lost traditions are far more common than was once believed. It is often an open question which instruments were used, what timbres they possessed, under what circumstances letter and practice differed. Robert Donington, in his remarkable *Baroque Music: Style and Performance*, surveys two centuries of descriptions of musical performance, drawing conclusions about interpretive styles. Tempo, for example, was far from rigidly constrained. Frescobaldi (1615-16) asked that his Toccatas be played "now slowly, now quickly, and even held in the air." Couperin (1716) called for a "spirit," a "soul" that must be added to his compositions' metrical regularity. Such comments suggest that the letter of the text—at least as far as metronomic regularity is concerned—was tempered by something more flexible in practice. And this does not even begin to take account of "oral tradition" such as ornamentation, tempi, accents in phrases, improvisation. The score itself, in sum, may be unable to give us a hint of appropriate performance.

Much of musical scholarship during the last century has concentrated on such issues: first the establishment of the letter of the score and then the documentation of its performance tradition, creating canonical texts along with laws governing their reading. What has given the authenticity movement its energy is partly the assertion that at the end of this quest there will be an immutable version of musical truth, which is latent in the letter of the text and in the ways in which that text was first brought to life.

This is a view at once absolutist (it asserts a notion of the score that is almost biblical in its authority) and totally relative (the score is a mere cipher without the interpolation of historical understanding). It is also resolutely anti-contemporary. If authenticity sounds like a form of fundamentalism, a view of a holy text protected from the grubby chaos of debate and revision, this is because it is. "Interpreting [the Brandenburg Concertos] is a very complicated thing," Nikolaus Harnoncourt has said. "Like reading the Bible." Authenticity believes in the sacredness of the original text and in the privileged positions of those who saw it come into being. It rejects the accumulated traditions established by less privileged believers. It treats performance as a matter of restoration and rehabilitation rather than interpretation.

As authenticity has become the dominant interpretive approach of the late decades of the century, the musicological debate over its virtues has become more and more intense. There have been the expected semi-philosophical critiques, on the order of "if a tree falls in a forest, does it make a sound?" How can we presume to guess what the will of a composer is? If we knew what that will was, would it be that important to satisfy it? Can we ever truly re-create a historical performance? Isn't any authentic performance doomed to be of our time?

These are all attempts to take authenticity at its word. But no fundamentalism is shaken by reasoned argument, even when the answers are fairly obvious. Sometimes the will of the composer is important, sometimes it is not. ("Can an interpreter restrict himself to remaining

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in the shadow of the author?" asked the harpsichordist Wanda Landowska. "What a commonplace! What a joke!") Sometimes the composer is the best spokesman for his scores, sometimes he is not. (Stravinsky's music is not generally served by his performances.) Sometimes a historical re-creation is interesting, sometimes it is beyond even a fanatic's fantasy. (There has been, as far as I know, no true re-creation of 19th-century concert music, for that would mean eschewing electric illumination for the sake of candlelight. This is not a minor atmospheric point: much of the reported swooning and sensitive sighing common during Chopin's piano playing had to do with the crowded salons, the closed windows, and the dozens of candle flames consuming oxygen.)

No "authentic" performance, of course, is ever authentic. It is always contemporary. Landowska's readings were of her time, and Norrington's are of ours. The "in itself"—that re-creation so devoutly wished for—is as elusive in music as it is in metaphysics. In short, the demands of authenticity are frequently absurd. And its claims are, for the most part, overwrought.

II.

The main problem with the authenticity movement, however, is not its claims but its results, its musical performances. An intriguing case is Roger Norrington's recent recordings of the Beethoven symphonies. Norrington, aged 55, a British-born conductor, rose to prominence during the last five years, after working as a choral conductor, a tenor, a string player, and music director of the Kent Opera in England. He made his name directing pedagogical musical weekends, called "Experiences," that focused on major works performed in "historically aware" style. There was a Haydn Experience, a Beethoven Experience, a Berlioz Experience, combining lectures with rehearsals and "authentic" performances.

Norrington brought the orthodoxies of authenticity into the 19th century. He insisted first on instruments of the period. This means that the timpani are small and hit with hard sticks rather than cushioned mallets; that the horns are valveless; that the violins are played with gut strings. As Norrington put it in his notes to the Ninth Symphony, the aim is to restore it "to the humane, quicksilver thought-world of the Classical Period." The major innovation in all these performances, though, is in tempi. In 1817 Beethoven obtained a metronome and proceeded to put down detailed tempo markings for his symphonies and string quartets (through the "Harp" Quartet); he criticized tempi that "to my great regret have so often been misunderstood." The Ninth Symphony was composed after Beethoven had already used the metronome extensively; and so his instructions, it is argued, were precise.

Two of the most controversial sections in the Ninth Symphony are the trio of the second movement and the march of the last. Norrington takes both at an uncharacteristically plodding pace, following the metronomic markings. Yet Benjamin Zander, the music director of the Boston Philharmonic who was one of the pioneers of the "original tempi" school of Beethoven performances, reports that he began by playing the works at Norrington's tempi, but then discovered that the presumed authentic metronome markings were actually due to mistakes by Beethoven's relatively unschooled nephew Karl, who transcribed his uncle's instructions. The conversation books in which the deaf composer wrote in his own hand, Zander argues, indicate tempi twice as fast.

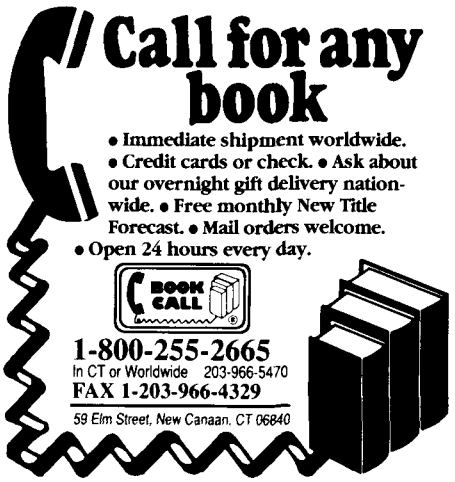
I won't enter the debate about conversation books and manuscript annotations, but the argument does display the style of the contemporary discussion. Each side claims absolute truth and argues the musical obviousness of the results. The final word is not primarily musical (what are the implications of a tempo for an interpretation?) but scholarly (which metronome setting did Beethoven put down?). Tempo is also a notoriously slippery musical element. Even the metronome markings now taken as holy writ in the symphonies were mostly put down by Beethoven years after the work's composition. So who is to say that they were precisely the ones originally intended? And even if they are "authentic," the way they are executed can create radically different results. Karajan once told of a performance he recorded in one city sounding much too fast when he listened to it again in another; he felt that the altitude had changed his heartbeat, and thus affected his timing.

Rather than argue over the letter of the text, it makes far more sense to argue over the text's meaning. Zander, for example, attacking Norrington's slow tempo, argues:

> The ecstatically heroic character of the words for the march are much more apt for a very fast tempo ("Joyous as his suns are flying across the firmament's magnificent design, run, brothers, your race, joyously, as does a hero towards victory") than for the comic, farcelike slow tempo of dotted quarter = 84.

This textual argument is more powerful than any that could be mounted by scholarship. Norrington's performance does not, in fact, make sense of the tempo. At first one's interest is piqued, but under reflection it fades. What sort of interpretation should be given this text? Why would it be somber or mocking? What role do the variations of the last movement play in this scheme? Norrington leaves no answers.

Because authenticity locates the meaning of music in the sounds produced during a composition's first performance, it also produces a strange kind of formalism—a formalism of practice. At its most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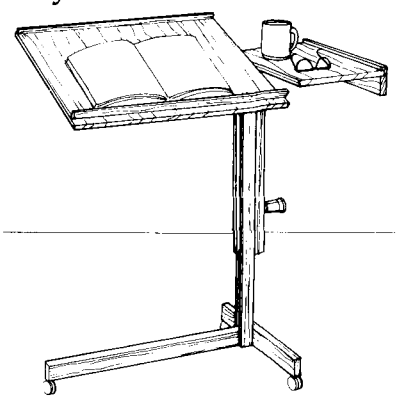

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extreme, it means that authenticity is applied most rigorously when most connected to "objective" detail, to the facts of timing and timbre; but that is precisely the sort of detail that is least essential to music's life, which is to be found in its phrasing and its conception.

Norrington, again, provides a powerful example. He has a fine sense of pulse, a sort of rhythmic poise. When I saw him conduct the "Pastoral" Symphony last summer in Tanglewood, I had the same sense I have in listening to these discs: he drives the music, his eye resolutely fixed on its accents and vigor. That is why his performances of the Second and Eighth symphonies are often convincing; they create the quicksilver playful world Norrington seeks in every symphony. But they also "move" even when they shouldn't. The accents are disruptive, self-conscious. One doesn't hear a musical argument, but something resembling an accompaniment to dance. Norrington stresses the aspect of dance. "It's also the life of the music," he has said. "It's what it's about—the general sense of moving, or making one feel the movement." But this is not what this music is about. It is not dance; it merely uses dance. Movement is only Beethoven's tool. Transformation is his goal.

"Once you have the right instruments and the right speed," Norrington has said of his interpretations, "you're doing everything it says. But phrasing is where the creativity comes in." Phrasing though, is a matter not of creativity, but of understanding. It is precisely where authenticity is most important—intellectual authenticity, which has very little to do with original instruments or tempi. Furtwängler had it, and so does Bruggen, who is also recording the Beethoven cycle with original instruments. For phrasing is what allows one to follow the musical argument in the "Eroica", to hear the deliberate imbalances and surprises that spice the first movement's sweep. It is hard to stay with Norrington's interpretations; they slip and slide with a quaint, frenetic glee.

It is also hard to imagine anybody reacting to these works the way one listener of the period did: "Now that I have heard the terrifying giant Beethoven, I know exactly where musical art stands; the question is to take it from there and push it further." The image of the "terrifying giant," the preoccupation with the sublime, the qualities of obsessive analysis and dreamy reflection—all these Beethovenian traits and Romantic tropes seem irrelevant to Norrington's project.

They are also irrelevant for Norrington's recording of Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique"—which should be no surprise, since it was Berlioz who wrote that line about Beethoven. Norrington's performance is almost a "novelty" in the old sense of the word; it is not weighty, but casually amusing. It is characterized by the use of original instruments—including ophicleides (obsolete brass instruments with a sort of gaseous bleat). Norrington wants to give the work "a classicism and a clarity which go well with what we know of Berlioz." Yet in fact, as Berlioz put it, the "Symphonie Fantastique" was to have "fire and tears within." The timpani were not meant to be punctuation, but "distant sounds of thunder."

As D. Kern Holoman points out, Berlioz loved the innovations of ever newer instruments, including some he used in the symphony and others developed even later. Berlioz was enamored of the modern English horn, valved brass, pedal harps, and the instruments invented by Adolphe Sax. He later thought that the wooden flutes used at the premiere of "Symphonie Fantastique" were "only fit to be played at a fair." Adrian Corleonis has noted that Berlioz later wrote of the ophicleides in one copy of the score, "Change to tubas." And—most peculiarly for an authentician—Norrington ignores Berlioz's orchestral desires by using just over four score players; Berlioz wanted at least 130, and actually thwarted a scheduled performance because sufficient benches and chairs would not fit on stage. So much for levity and lightness, let alone fidelity to the first mythic performance, about which Berlioz gave this ringing endorsement: "It was good enough to give a reasonable idea of the music."

III.

In the last few decades, in fact, criticism of authenticity has grown. Raymond Leppard accused orthodox authenticists of creating a "world of cult and bigotry" in their absolute demands. Joseph Kerman has called "authentic" a "baleful term" that "has now acquired the same cult value when applied to music as 'natural' or 'organic' when applied to food." Richard Taruskin, a performer of early music, a musicologist, and an ardent polemicist, has linked the impulses of authenticity with all the evil adjectives he associates with "high modernism": "intransigent, objectivist, elitist."

In response, during the past ten years, some of the barricades have been crumbling. More and more practitioners have claimed exquisite moderation. Harnoncourt, who once proclaimed of the elements of historical performance "All or nothing," last year said, "We were always misunderstood. I never used the term authenticity, I never used the words right and wrong, because I was always convinced that authenticity is nonsense and it was not our interest to pursue it. . . . The only authentic performance of a piece of music would be the composer's own." His colleague in authentic Bach cantata performances, Gustav Leonhardt, said of "historical faithfulness": "I don't know what it amounted to and I still don't know what it amounts to." And even Norrington says that "the point about playing Beethoven on old instruments, of course, is to make him sound new." It is as if the priests of a religion were suddenly turning agnostic.

The truth is, there has been a crisis of belief. Among some, it has meant a welcome change in musical approach, particularly in recent recordings of Bach. Philippe Herreweghe and John Eliot Gardiner, both interested in historical performance, have argued that an understanding of musical "rhetoric" is just as important as any of the issues of instrumentation and tempi that exercised the authenticists of years past. Both have chosen to use mature women singers in preference to soprano boys, and both have treated the notion of re-creation of the original performance as a "chimera," to use Gardiner's word. Their "rhetoric" is something more traditional, familiar from Bach scholarship dating back to Schweitzer and Spitta: the music's organization and its form, its pictorial connection to texts, the structure of its arguments—aspects that were often subsidiary to the brute positivism of other authenticists. Gardiner, in a recent recording of Berlioz's version of Gluck's "Orphée et Euridice," has even called this manifestly inauthentic revision of Gluck's work a "fascinating and plausible alternative version of the opera." He grants the composition a form of "secondary authenticity," because of its effort to reach the essence of an earlier work through a secondary elaboration of it.

This is near heresy, of course, for the ideology; for it argues that a text can indeed be modified, modernized, and interpreted, creating versions that are "alternative" rather than invalid. It asserts, along with the mainstream tradition of musical interpretation since the 19th century, that music is a historical art, that it not only takes place within time, it also takes place through time. Bach's music is simply not the same now as it was; it is a part of history, not a frozen thing standing outside it.

This is what the concept of "early music" implied from the moment it became

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important during the last century. The pre-bourgeois repertory was obviously different from the music that was beginning to be heard in the new concert halls. It existed on the other side of a cultural and aesthetic boundary; it required reconstruction, rescue, reinterpretation. That was why Mendelssohn's revival of the St. Matthew Passion was such an extraordinary event in 1829, and why modern musical scholarship itself began to develop out of the love of past music. Brahms, Wagner, Liszt were all captivated by the musical world lost to them. But the approach of these figures to early music was not fundamentalist, it was historicist. There was no attempt to restore the past with "authentic" practice. Berlioz rewrote Gluck; Busoni rewrote Bach. The past was loved, and appropriated; the scores were rescored, brought into the contemporary universe. The music was made part of the living tradition of interpretation—even if distortions were introduced in the process.

Some avatars of contemporary authenticity are returning to historicism, and correcting excessive appropriations. In some recent "authentic" performances, the interpretation is quite orthodox in some respects, but in others it is given a twist that is unmistakably contemporary. This was the case last year when William Christie conducted a hauntingly historical version of Lully's "Atys" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, complete with historical instruments and historical costumes. For all the authentic trappings, this 17th-century opera became an extraordinary contemporary ballet, so formal and abstract were its motions, so self-conscious its presentation. The work was returned to history. Its alien character was made more clear by being taken seriously; there was no pretense that this was what Louis XIV might have seen.

Still, for other performers—for Norrington, above all—the crisis of belief has taken a rather different, more dangerous course. This course derives from the original oppositional impulse that gave birth to the authenticity movement—an opposition to historicism and to mainstream musical taste. The attempt is not to bring the work through the past into the present, but to reject historicism in favor of a restored past. At one time this impulse was aligned with the "avant-garde," rejecting the performing tradition of the 19th century along with its repertory, opposing the bourgeois musical universe with pre-bourgeois exoticism. "An interpretation must be attempted," Harnoncourt has written, "in which the entire romantic tradition of performance is ignored."

Norrington preserves the avant-gardist pose, but he applies it to the very 19th-century repertory against which "authenticity" once defined himself. In doing so, he has inadvertently exposed a central paradox in his movement. One of its unspoken presumptions has been that a work could be considered in some way "authentic," true to itself or to an idea, in opposition to an "inauthentic" world and "inauthentic" performance; but this, it turns out, is a tenet central to the 19th-century aesthetic tradition. The authentic movement has accepted the key notion of "truth" in a work even as it has rejected the culture that gave birth to that notion.

In taking authenticity into the 19th century, Norrington extends the movement's adversarial pose to the aesthetic itself, to the very premise of the music he performs. He argues not only that we have the performances wrong, but that we have the aesthetic wrong. You think the "Eroica" Symphony is grandly heroic, ruthlessly brilliant, egomaniacally profound? No, says Norrington, it is bouncy, conversational, light-headed. You think the art of early Romanticism is weighty with import? Lighten up, it is an extension of the early classical period. Musical "authenticity," with its reverence for first things, here weakens the impact of the notion of "authenticity" itself. It substitutes the idea of truth in scholarship for the idea of truth in art. Norrington ends up rejecting a central aspect of these works themselves. For what better representative do we have of the Romantic belief in inner truth and authentic expression than Beethoven's symphonies? An authentic performance of a 19th-century work, in Norrington's hands, is one from which all pretense of spiritual specificity is stripped away.

"I like to get an orchestra to smile while they're playing," Norrington told *Interview* in January, "instead of that awful high seriousness that sets in." The "Ode to Joy" he described as "humorous, rather naive," "certainly not cosmic," and a "very jolly piece." "Prairie music," he concluded. And what of the Mozart operas and their mixture of humor and grace and tragedy? "You find it's a huge send-up, that you're being carried along." Mozart should be played "very, very wild." As for all the rest of Romanticism, it should not bear the least relationship to the literary texts so central to it, nor to the performing traditions that have come down to us. Wagner should be played "without too much weight." Tchaikovsky "could be played a great deal lighter."

"The whole of 19th-century music might have been overblown," says jolly Roger. "There was a time when art was serious, and I guess that was important to people. But we can relax now; we can stop trying to protect it. If we go on protecting it, it will die on us, because people will get bored, and they won't think it's relevant any longer. Especially kids. They want to enjoy it. They want to have fun. They get excited when an orchestra's enjoying itself and it becomes more like jazz or popular music." And so the 19th century is turned on its head; art is merely fun, entertainment for all, useful for amusement.

All this is hardly "true" to the content of this music. Surely fun is not the most certain path to authenticity, though it may be the surest way to popular success. In Norrington's recordings, in sum, authenticity becomes postmodern. If the term "early music" denoted a break in a tradition, this most recent turn of authenticity makes nearly *all* music early music; the tradition is giddily splintered, governed by instances of performance and an overarching attitude of playful noncommittal. The Norrington Experience brings to mind Lionel Trilling's ety-

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mology for one of this century's most overused words: "Violent meanings," he pointed out, "are explicitly in the Greek ancestry of the word 'authentic.' Authenteo: to have full power over; also to commit a murder. Authentes: not only a master and doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide."

Trilling meant that the quest for authenticity in art is risky: it can disrupt the balance between truth and interpretation, between tradition and will. Norrington goes even further. Taking authenticity to its limits, he dismisses any content of the work other than its statistics. This gives the performer ultimate power over the text: *he* becomes the arbiter of the "authentic." The text is tied to no tradition, only to its origins and to postmodern play. This power over the text overturns our notion of art itself. And the perpetrator, despite himself, really does become a suicide. •

The elusive market, or the sad history of *perestroika*.

What Is To Be Done?

By Richard E. Ericson

It is no secret that Mikhail Gorbachev's economic reforms are not working. Inflation is rampant, markets for consumer goods have broken down, production quality and quantity remain poor, and the long sought technological advance has yet to take place. Radical economic reform seems to be stuck. Many of its economic laws and administrative changes are in place, yet they have had no positive effect. *Perestroika* has disrupted economic activity and loosened controls, but it has not provided alternative mechanisms to the Stalinist economic system that Gorbachev inherited. Thus the economic bureaucracy, responsible for "making things happen" in the Soviet system, has struggled to maintain economic activity in the only way it knows; and it has become a serious obstacle to further change.

Gorbachev's response has been to shift the central focus of reform efforts from economics to politics, where the aim is to mobilize support from "the bottom up," since initiatives from the top have gotten bogged down. The realization that resistance to reform is rooted in the psychology, the political culture, and the ideology of the nation has made *glasnost* an increasingly important part of *perestroika*. It's not just outside analysts, such as Padma Desai of Columbia University, who argue that political democratization is an essential part of a successful reform strategy. That is the official position that emerged from the 19th Communist Party Conference of June 1988, and the theme of Abel Aganbegyan's inside look at the state of *perestroika*.

The "radicalization" of the reform process is reflected both in the understanding of the depth of Soviet economic problems and in the nature of the proposed solutions. The early diagnosis was that the economy was fundamentally sound but required greater discipline, improved planning, and better social and investment policies to pull itself out of near stagnation. Now the Soviet leadership acknowledges that the economic system faces a true crisis: it is the system itself that is at the root of the economic problems facing the Soviet Union.

Originally, the official prescription was more "discipline" and "acceleration." Now central planning, state ownership of the means of production, and even the "leading role of the Party" are subject to debate. Soviet-style socialism, in short, is more often blamed than celebrated. According to more and more people in positions of power, salvation lies outside of state action and central control—in decentralized individual and group effort, in worker collectives and cooperatives interacting in real, if regulated, markets.

Anders Åslund, a Swedish economist who recently spent three years in Sweden's embassy in Moscow, has thoroughly analyzed the background and the early stages of Gorbachev's economic reforms. He shows how they began as little more than a continuation of the "treadmill of reforms" of the preceding 20 years, which meant further "perfectionings" of the economy and its "economic mechanism." But quickly the process started to evolve, each new stage driven by earlier failures and by growing resistance within the state and Party bureaucracies, each reaching for ever more radical measures. As the truly disastrous consequences of the Stalinist economic system became more apparent, the situation looked increasingly alarming: within the Soviet leadership, fear grew that the Soviet Union could lose its position as a major power. Åslund traces the muddled odyssey, both among Soviet intellectuals and within the Soviet leadership, toward a "market socialism" that would replace the "command-administrative mechanism" inherited from Stalin's "great Socialist offensive" of the 1930s.

Some of the fruits of this process are evident in recent books by Soviet authors who set out to explain the causes, the course, and the consequences of *perestroika* to an American audience. Abel Aganbegyan is the administrative head of the economics section of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and was recently appointed Rector of the Council of Ministers' Academy of the National Economy. His book addresses the situation of late 1988, giving a highly personal account of the evolution of the reform driving *perestroika*, and passionately arguing that this reform must become irreversible in order to succeed in modernizing the Soviet socialist economy. Aganbegyan's position, and his reported closeness to Gorbachev (he was an early adviser), gives his views an official air, though his manner is relaxed and conversational. His book expresses an optimistic, centrist position. It calls for decentralization within a framework of regulated markets and prices, and assumes continuing central control over key industries and technologies, to ensure the proper development of the Soviet economy.

Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov are economists at the USA-Canada In-

Inside Perestroika: The Future of the Soviet Economy
by Abel Aganbegyan
(Harper & Row, 241 pp., $19.95)

Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform
by Anders Åslund
(Cornell University Press, 219 pp., $38.50, $12.95 paper)

Perestroika in Perspective: The Design and Dilemmas of Soviet Reform
by Padma Desai
(Princeton University Press, 138 pp., $14.95)

The Turning Point: Revitalizing the Soviet Economy
by Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov
(Doubleday, 336 pp., $21.95)

Richard E. Ericson is professor of economics at Columbia University and a member of the W. Averell Harriman Institute for the Advanced Study of the Soviet Union.

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stitute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. They represent the more radical edge of reform. They argue against any form of central planning and direct price control, and for radical decentralization and marketization of economic activity. They buttress their case with a lengthy historical and theoretical analysis of the sources and the depth of the problems. They would have the Soviet state pursue a liberal social policy, like Sweden's, and an industrial policy, like Japan's, in an essentially market economy. Their book usefully stakes out a position considerably more liberal than even the most reformist official positions.

The present dramatic changes in the Soviet Union had their genesis before Gorbachev came to power. Yuri V. Andropov, Brezhnev's successor, recognized that the economy was in trouble and called for a thorough analysis of its problems, and for recommended solutions, at the July 1983 Party Plenum. That date marks the inauguration of the wide-ranging debate that still continues.

One product of the debate was the "Novosibirsk Report," written in late July 1983 by the sociologist Tatiana Zaslavskaya, an early adviser to Gorbachev. It recommended decentralization of planning and management, along with greater individual responsibility and incentives. It was aimed, however, at better implementation of central objectives and plans, not at liberalizing the market or allowing a more decentralized choice of goals. Moreover, it was not a blueprint for policy: the paper was designed for debate, and contained critical analysis and some general ideas, not proposals. But it did predict the early thrust of Gorbachev's reform, which was to continue along his predecessor's path of modifying the economic mechanism. And it set out the conceptual framework that to a large extent still guides the current official position.

Andropov also launched a series of major campaigns stressing plan, production, and labor discipline, to keep up production and to improve quality. And he embarked on a struggle against corruption and illegal economic activity. But these measures, like the early stages of the debate, failed to come to grips with the root causes of Soviet economic problems. The "Large Scale Industrial Experiment," introducing a large number of planning and incentive reforms simultaneously in five industries, was begun, and further changes seemed to be in the works; but all efforts at reform were brought to a halt by Andropov's death, and by the accession of the ailing Chernenko, long Brezhnev's right-hand man in the Party.

The economic situation continued to deteriorate, and a growing sense of despair settled on the Soviet Union. The accession of Gorbachev in March 1985, however, gave new life to economic reform. Gorbachev immediately took vigorous action to counter the perceived stagnation and disorder of the Soviet economy. But his initial moves were limited, aimed at improving the functioning of the command economy rather than fundamentally reforming the system.

He focused on accelerating growth through altering the structure of investment and increasing its volume. To this end, the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP 1986-90) was rewritten several times. Its goals were unrealistically ambitious, particularly its targets for technological change and investment. Emphasis was placed on modernizing the industrial base, the machine-tool industries in particular. A second set of early measures dealt with enforcing economic discipline, through massive personnel changes, an anti-alcohol campaign, stricter quality control, and a struggle against "unearned" incomes. All these measures aimed to inspire people to work harder, to achieve the near impossible; and they did yield a temporary payoff in improved economic performance.

Still, nothing was done at this first stage of *perestroika* to address the real source of economic problems: the "command-administrative" economic mechanism. Åslund shows that the first 21 months of Gorbachev's rule were the formative period of *perestroika*. Instead of systematic comprehensive reform, 1986 saw a lot of tinkering, and the beginnings of a series of experiments and reorganizations within the hierarchical structure of the economy. These included extending the "large-scale experiment" with decentralizing management, and enhancing financial incentives within the framework of comprehensive central planning. There were also a number of service and consumer goods sector experiments, testing real autonomy for firms and a market orientation. Several industrial enterprises were placed on full self-financing, requiring them to pay all their own expenditures, including investment. There were experiments with subcontracting and other organizational innovations, and numerous changes were introduced in the details of agricultural organization and incentives.

The experiments were far from a great success. On the contrary, they showed that the command-administrative economy was a consistent whole, that no one of its mutually supporting pieces could be changed in isolation from the others. The self-financing of enterprises, for example, required fixed tax rates and an ability freely to spend earnings as necessary to support business activity. The former was resisted by both ministerial superiors and the Ministry of Finance, because it reduced their discretionary power, inhibiting their ability to meet plan targets. The latter proved disruptive of the planned allocation of re-

To H. J., the Master

There is no somber servant to announce him at
the door, and yet somehow, always, his wide presence,
deliberate and circuitous, *enfin*, it

makes itself known. Floating at my shoulder, almost
as nebulous as a style, I perceive that he
comprehended the distinguished thing at last, for

it hangs at his side, an immaterial fire,
unspoken and unable to be passed on. I
stumble over the proper form of address for

a benign spirit and strain like a scullery
maid embarrassed by the weight of her burden to
articulate, clumsily, the quiddity of

my awe. Excuse me, Sir. If you had to carry
the modern idiom, you would walk the halls with
a different grace, suited to a different struggle.

Mary Maxwell

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sources in the absence of real wholesale trade. The great lesson learned, as Aganbegyan states, was that half measures are doomed to failure.

The payoff to these experiments came in the first half of 1987, with the introduction of the second, more radical stage of economic reform. The basic structure of this reform was presented in the documents of the June 1987 Plenum and in succeeding legislation of the Supreme Soviet. It involved the first true attempt at comprehensive reform of the economic system, a "Radical Restructuring of the Management of the Economy," as the visionary document of the June Plenum was called.

It is this stage of Gorbachev's reforms that is the unifying focus of these books. Like the Hungarian reform of 1968, this stage aimed to provide for flexible, efficient, decentralized implementation of centrally determined objectives through the use of tightly controlled "socialist markets," rather than creating a true market economy as urged by Shmelev and Popov. It provided institutional and organizational forms for the general ideas of the Novosibirsk Report, extending those ideas to the more comprehensive scope of reform now recognized to be necessary. The changes proclaimed this time were more concrete, if still incomplete, and they promised exciting results. Yet both those results and the changes that were to yield them were based on a large amount of wishful thinking, since the possibility of failure was too bleak to contemplate.

The centerpiece of this stage of reform was the new "Law on State Enterprise." Under the law, enterprises were to become fully self-financing and largely self-managing. There was to be an expanded role for workers in decision-making and more direct control over most of its investment activity. Central planning was to be focused on long-run strategic and developmental issues; it was to provide general suggestions and guidelines, rather than to command specific performance. "Socialist markets" were to replace the direct allocation of supplies and products; price formation was to be thoroughly reformed and made more dependent on market forces; the Party was to step back from the day-to-day management of economic affairs. The plan called for a complete revamping of the financial system, including new commercial banks. Finally, foreign trade was liberalized, formally allowing greater direct interaction between Soviet organizations and the world market; through joint ventures, foreign capital was admitted into the Soviet economy.

This stage of the reform laid out a logically consistent program, but it remains largely one of form without content. The heart of any decentralized economic system—well-functioning markets—is not really provided for. Instead, there is the ill-defined concept of "socialist markets," apparently distinguished, in Aganbegyan's eyes, by greater limitation, regulation, and price control than ordinary markets. They are to be tame markets, without middlemen, "speculation" (buying low and selling high), or real competition; they are to involve only controlled wholesale trade through either a state marketing system or direct contact of producers and users. Prices are to be influenced, but not determined, by market forces; they are to be instruments of central control, rather than autonomous arbiters of market forces. Moreover, there is no clear idea of what commercial banking is. The result is a confusing mix of new economic forms and old command economy substance.

This contradiction is evident in the reformers' desire to maintain central control over the strategy and broad directions of economic development. Gorbachev's statements, the reform decrees, and Aganbegyan's writings all point to this control as essential to the maintenance of socialism. It is to be maintained through the use of "economic levers," including control over key prices, foreign exchange rates, and tax, subsidy, and incomes policy. The central planners and administrative organs (especially ministries) are also to maintain control over major new investment and to set growth and financial targets. In short, the essence of a socialist economy as a consciously optimized system is to be maintained. As Desai explains, these controls go a long way toward vitiating the markets that the reform is trying so hard to foster. For the freedom to experiment and to innovate, to alter ends and means, and to disrupt received economic patterns and relations is essential to the proper functioning of markets.

This comprehensive package, as Åslund notes, is not a full blueprint for systemic economic reform, although Aganbegyan writes as if it were. It is a political compromise between the radical reformers led by Gorbachev and the more conservative technocrats, the interests of the vast entrenched economic bureaucracy and the reactionaries. It was supposed to be implemented during the last three years of the 12th Five Year Plan, with only price reform taking as long as three years. Thus the economy would begin the 13th Five Year Plan (1991-95) fully reformed and reinvigorated.

But reality has refused to cooperate. Organizational changes and the introduction of the "new conditions of management" for Soviet enterprises are apparently taking place, leading Aganbegyan to speak of the present stage of *perestroika* as a transition to a new economic mechanism. Still, many of the changes are merely superficial, and each of these authors correctly stresses that implementation is hampered at every turn by bureaucratic foot-dragging and self-interested interpretations and misinterpretations of reform decrees. But the bureaucrats' sluggishness is not all selfishly motivated. In the present economic system, bureaucrats have to keep behaving much as they have in the past just to keep the economy functioning. The result is an economy going through new but mostly meaningless, and indeed disruptive, motions.

The timing of real changes, particularly of price reform, has repeatedly been pushed back. And price reform is the linchpin. Its delay deals a fatal blow to any attempt to decentralize economic decisions and to introduce financial incentives—that is, to use markets. In the absence of flexible prices that truly reflect use values and opportunity costs, economic decisions will be fundamentally misinformed. This is one consequence of the limited liberalization that the reform has so far brought.

Yet there is reason for the delay in price reform, as Aganbegyan points out. Severe chaos must result from any attempt to establish proper value relations in an economy in which they have been systematically distorted for over 60 years. Nobody, including Western experts, has any idea of the appropriate relative prices for over 24 million industrial products, or for the millions of other commodities and basic factor and consumer services. Moreover, price adjustments, since they will disrupt economic activity, are sure to lead to increased unemployment, and to a substantial drop in the standard of living in the near term.

And there are deeper problems. Desai goes to the heart of the matter, arguing that Gorbachev and his advisers have followed a faulty design in introducing markets. Her main point is that the lack of private property, free entry, capital, equity, and private labor markets, as well as the absence of a true market environment for firms and farms, is likely to stifle Schumpeterian innovation and to limit gains in efficiency. In this situation markets and prices, even if they are allowed to form freely, will almost certainly provide incorrect measures of opportunity costs and relative scarcities.

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It is no surprise that pressure mounted for more radical measures. Indeed, a further radicalization of the economy took place in mid-1988, together with an even more significant political radicalization. The 19th Extraordinary Party Conference inaugurated the third—so far penultimate—stage of *perestroika*. It incorporates a three-pronged radicalization: an opening to private and quasi-private forms of business enterprise; a widening of the opening to foreign economic interaction and enterprise; and the democratization and pluralization of the political process.

These efforts to introduce outside competition reflect the primary lesson that has been learned from the reform process so far: that the old system is extremely resilient and stable (if highly wasteful and inefficient), that it must be subject to a more serious shock, to more serious competition, if it is to begin to change fundamentally. Indeed, these measures go part of the way toward establishing the preconditions for properly functioning markets, although they do not go anywhere near far enough.

The first policy involves an ever more radical discussion of property rights and the limits of socialism. It also involves the legalization of individual labor activity and a new "Law on Cooperation," to establish a legal framework for non-state enterprise in virtually any area of economic activity. This is an extreme break with past practice. The new laws have cracked the monopoly of state control over economic activity, although such non-state activity remains still only an extremely small share of the Soviet economy, and has lately been subject to increasing attack. These measures also provide some hope of easing the dire situation of the Soviet consumer. They are a major part of an effort to expand the opportunities for spending money, a critical step in making money real.

Still, as with the rest of *perestroika*, this radicalization is too little and perhaps too late. This policy direction violates ideological assumptions and stands accused by the opponents of *perestroika* as an abandonment of socialism. The second policy occasions similar resistance. The structure of the central bureaucracy that oversees foreign trade has been repeatedly altered, and its direct influence steadily reduced. The right to acquire, to hold, and to use foreign exchange has been vastly expanded. Now not only state enterprises but also private cooperatives are allowed to take part in international economic interaction, although new restrictions have been recently introduced. The constraints on joint ventures have been steadily reduced, and majority ownership by foreign partners is now allowed.

Aganbegyan and Shmelev and Popov all call for such measures, and for even more liberal policies such as free trade zones and the full convertibility of the ruble. Indeed, they devote major portions of their books to the urgent need for expanding Soviet activity in the world economy. Both books are optimistic about the prospects of enhanced Soviet participation in the world economy, despite fairly sober evaluations of the tremendous obstacles still to be overcome. In these and other Soviet writings, one sees fatalism at the root of optimism: there can be no alternative to improvement. Åslund and Desai, by contrast, focus on the tremendous difficulties that stand in the way of such Soviet participation—casting doubt, for example, on the ability of the Soviet Union to achieve early convertibility of the ruble.

The advantages of a liberalization of Soviet foreign economic relations are evident to all. First, importing consumer goods can answer increasingly critical shortages and absorb excess liquidity, allowing a stabilization of the currency and proper price reform. Such a policy finally seems to be finding favor in the political leadership, which has always preferred importing capital and technology to importing goods, on the grounds that the former limits dependence on foreign sources and unpredictable markets. Liberalized trade can also place useful competitive pressure on Soviet enterprises. And interaction with foreign firms, in particular participation in joint ventures, can impart useful information, both directly and by example, on modern business techniques and how to operate in markets. This is particularly important for preparing Soviet managers to operate in the new economic system.

The third prong of the third reform drive attacks the bureaucratic resistance directly. The economic bureaucracy is to be undercut by increasing worker control over firms, by introducing "pluralism" in forms of socialist enterprise. Local democratic control over economic activity through soviets (local governments), significantly reducing the powers of central economic bureaucracies, is to overcome the resistance to radical economic reform by shifting responsibility to new forces and institutions with less of a vested interest in the current system.

Real elections have taken place for much of a new Congress, which in turn has selected a reconstituted legislature, the new Supreme Soviet, with the power to direct the reform by writing economic laws. This Supreme Soviet is also to provide democratic control over planning and the state budget, counteracting the bureaucracy at the center. Further elections for local soviets began in the fall of 1989 and will continue through March 1990, and the first steps have been taken toward establishing regional financial autonomy, starting in the Baltic republics.

Yet the economic situation continues to deteriorate; the third wave of economic reform has begun to disintegrate. The laws now seen as critical to further economic reform were bogged down in rancorous debate in the new parliamentary bodies and were pushed off into the new year. The budget deficit and consumer markets crises led to a series of "emergency" measures and an "emergency program," approved in the Second Congress of People's Deputies in December of last year. They marked a relapse to traditional "command-administrative" methods. These include expansion of the scope of mandatory state orders; extension of locally controlled rationing; enhanced price controls; new restrictions on cooperatives, strike activity, and exporting; new taxes and wage growth restrictions; and a central planning emphasis on consumer goods production and importation. Amid a mood of intensifying gloom, price reform and further structural changes have again been postponed.

Despite this retreat from reform, some real progress has been made in the Soviets' understanding of their economic predicament. Under the leadership of Leonid Abalkin, head of the new government's Economic Reform Commission, a new vision of the desired system has emerged, and for the first time serious thought has been given to the nature of the transition. The new vision is much closer to, though still more conservative than, Shmelev and Popov's conception. Abalkin recognizes the need for real, well-functioning markets for coordinat-

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ing, if not determining, objectives. The transition to this thoroughly regulated market system is to take six years: one year to stabilize the economy and build a legislative foundation for the new system; two years to launch new economic mechanisms, including new price systems; and three years to learn to operate under the new system. The process is to be generated and regulated by the democratic organs that emerged during the third wave of reform. This program was essentially accepted by the Second Congress of People's Deputies, re-emphasizing the centrality of the political thrust of *perestroika*.

Where does this leave *perestroika*? Unfortunately, the political thrust is not likely to be as much of an economic solution as Aganbegyan seems to think. The measures taken, even in the third wave of radicalization, only tangentially address the underlying economic problem, which is the lack of real money and an effectively functioning system of markets. Even the new transition program is still a vague and incomplete outline. Each reforming step, even if pushed to its logical conclusion, is incapable by itself of improving the situation. For everything must be done at once for anything to yield good results: real money with convertibility is needed; flexible prices fully responsive to market forces are essential; the many institutions of financial and market infrastructure are required; enterprise autonomy in the choice of activities and partners is needed; financial, equity, land, labor, and capital markets must be set up; a spirit of entrepreneurship must be fostered. The "moderate-radical" approach of the transition program tries to do it in a piecemeal, regulated fashion, which only guarantees the growth of contradictions and imbalances.

The task of doing all this is overwhelmingly complex. The social and political resistance to it is likely to be strengthened by the further politicization of economic decisions. There is, moreover, the intellectual obstacle: nobody, in East or West, knows how to do it. There is no experience, there is not even a theory, of the successful transition from a command economy to a market economy. Along with the Hungarians and the Poles, the Soviets are groping their way through uncharted territory. The Soviets' approach, however, is only likely to create a decentralized, more politicized, yet highly regulated economic system that still fails to meet their hopes. The sobering truth is that without the discipline of real market constraints, individual enterprises and local governments may prove more economically irrational than the despised central bureaucrats. •

Pulpit Bully

BY ROBERT ALTER

The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter by Arthur Hertzberg

(Simon and Schuster, 428 pp., $22.95)

Considering Arthur Hertzberg's credentials, one would think he might have written an authoritative book on the American Jewish experience. He is the author of a work of meticulous historical scholarship, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, that throws important new light on its subject; as a past president of the American Jewish Congress, he has an insider's knowledge of the organizational politics of American Jewry; and he served for four decades as a congregational rabbi, struggling with the religious and social needs of ordinary Jews on a day-to-day basis. The book he has written, moreover, is presumably the consequence of careful meditation; most of a first draft was written in 1982, he says, and that initial version was doubtless preceded by at least a couple of years' preliminary research, which means the finished product must represent ten or more years of labor. But *The Jews in America* is an oddly unsatisfactory book, uncompelling as narrative history and often quite objectionable as glum rabbinical exhortation.

This is, avowedly, a work of popular history that relies heavily on the spadework of previous scholars; there is no paper trail of footnotes to show precisely how Hertzberg's sources have been used. Such history needs to be written with flair. The writing here is perfunctory, however, as though the author were bored or depressed by his subject. Narrative transitions are often mechanical; proposed recurrences of pattern between the early and the late phases of American Jewish history seem forced; and the prose is drab, a compound of formulaic abstractions and overworked metaphors (like this one, to represent the social ascent of American Jews after World War II: "By the mid-1950s, they had made base camp, through their rapid economic rise, for their final assault on the Mount Everest of elite status in America").

Hertzberg has not taken much more care with his facts than with his prose. *Partisan Review*, which was founded in 1934 to provide a leftist voice of opposition to Stalinism, is identified as part of "the 'struggling phalanx' of the international Stalinist Left." Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, which articulates a personal credo whereby the Jews are represented as the historical torchbearers of "instinctual renunciation" in the name of intellectual labor, is astonishingly described as "a plea for assimilation, with the clear implication that 'cured,' that is, de-Judaized, Jews would stem the tide of Nazi anti-Semitism." And so on.

As the last clause will suggest to any reader of Freud's book, Hertzberg can be very shaky on matters of interpretation. Thus, he convicts an article by Nathan Glazer, written in 1964, of being "unhistorical," because of Glazer's contention that there was a contradiction between the new black demand for affirmative action based on group quotas and the established American merit system under which Jews had thrived:

> Three decades earlier, Jewish intellectuals had been arguing that English literature was not the particular province of Christians, who supposedly best understood its spirit. Blacks were arguing, 40 years later, that the system of preferment in America had to change, again, to take account of their particular situation.

The proposed analogy is blatantly false. The Jews that Hertzberg has in mind never sought to overthrow the academic meritocracy. On the contrary, they wanted to ensure that it would operate more consistently, with no talented individuals excluded on grounds of ethnic or religious identity. The new demand for ethnic and racial quotas was, by contrast, a proposal that the system, not its malfunctions, be replaced; and a strong case can be made that it indeed ran counter not only to Jewish interests, but to equality for all individuals, not to speak of social efficiency.

Hertzberg's narrative is peppered with statistics, some of which are instructive. (My favorite: at one point in the 1920s seven out of nine national boxing championships were held by Jews.) But some of them cry out for documentation, especially in the absence of footnotes. Hertzberg's vigorous resistance to all Jewish apologetics may be bracing, but one wonders whether his account of the

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seamier side of American Jewry is not sometimes overdrawn. He claims, for example, that "at least one-third, perhaps half, of the known prostitutes of New York . . . in the early 1900s, were Jews"—a rather surprising overrepresentation in the trade, for which readers are entitled to some explanation of sources.

The desertion of families by immigrant fathers has long been known as a common phenomenon of the turn-of-the-century era (the *Forward*, the old Yiddish newspaper, devoted a special column to "vanished husbands"), but Hertzberg's claim that "at some point at least one-quarter of the Jewish fathers in America deserted their families" is preposterous. As Lucy Dawidowicz has observed, this conclusion is arrived at by using the figure of 100,000 cases of desertion in the major era of immigration; but that number is not a cumulative total, it reflects cases carried over from year to year. In fact, desertions accounted for only ten to 12 percent of the entire Jewish social-service caseload. Dawidowicz's own, more circumspect conclusion is that the rate of desertion was probably no more than one percent of the Jewish immigrant community.

This inflation of figures for anti-social and criminal behavior reflects an underlying bias of Hertzberg's book. He has set out to show that American Jewry, despite its intermittent episodes of individual and collective achievement, could not, will not, amount to much because the human material with which it began was so inferior. On the very first page he lays out the central thesis that he will repeat again and again: it was only the poor and the uneducated among European Jews who came to America. This is hardly surprising; the others would have had scant motive for emigration. Yet it is essential to add that the overwhelming majority of Central and Eastern European Jews in this period—preeminently the inhabitants of the Czarist Pale of Settlement—were living in conditions of physical misery. In arguing that only the poor came, Hertzberg has merely found a novel way of saying that the Jewish people as it was typically constituted in Eastern Europe came, minus a small sliver at the top of the social structure.

And did the absence of this sliver make the difference that Hertzberg claims it did? The cultural accomplishments of those who stayed in Europe, however different, do not seem overwhelmingly superior to those of the offspring of the immigrants. If Hertzberg is statistically right about the poverty of the immigrants, moreover, the way he sometimes stresses it barely conceals an offensive elitism. The immigrants, he writes, were "not a random sample of all East European Jewry; they were the masses without the classes." One wonders what sort of Jewish "classes" really existed in Eastern Europe. "The truth is," Hertzberg concludes, "that few of the 'better people' wanted to come to America." Though he is careful to put "better people" in quotation marks, he does not quite separate himself from the snobbery implicit in the phrase.

The question of education is more elusive. At many points, Hertzberg seems to refer to a lack of traditional Jewish learning. It is true, of course, that very few of the young men who came to America in steerage brought with them a mastery of the Talmud and its commentaries, but such learning was always the province of an elite. (What percentage of the male Jewish population of Lithuania ended up at the great yeshiva of Volozhin?) And the presence of some sort of learned elite among the immigrants is surely attested to by the fact that major institutions of Jewish learning were created, and have sustained themselves, in this country—the Yeshiva University of the Orthodox Jews, the Jewish Theological Seminary of the Conservative Jews, the Hebrew Union College of the Reform Jews. Beginning in the 1960s, moreover, the children of these immigrants, entering into the domain of the American university, have produced the greatest flourishing of modern Jewish scholarship anywhere outside the state of Israel.

Elsewhere Hertzberg refers instead to a lack of secular learning, citing the tiny proportion of immigrants who belonged to any of the trained professions. But, as his own account later makes clear, the vocational profile of the immigrants as laborers and petty merchants reflected the circumstances of a particular historical moment, not the human—shall we say genetic?—material involved. They may have been poor, and lacking in secular educational opportunities, but an inordinate number of them were smart. By 1905, Hertzberg tells us, Jews were the majority in the City College of New York. By 1910 they accounted for roughly 25 percent of the enrollment in American medical schools.

This success of American Jews in the learned professions and in intellectual life is hardly news. Hertzberg is inclined to write it off as still another expression of the lumpen Jewish immigrants' vulgar drive to make it big in the new society. In any case, he sees virtually no collective hope for this Jewry, with its "shallow roots," on American soil. The book he has written is part jeremiad, part obituary. "After nearly four centuries," he concludes, "the momentum of Jewish experience in America is essentially spent." And if evidence to the contrary presents itself, as it does for all with eyes to see, it must be ruled out of court. Thus, about a recent study that shows that at least nine out of ten American Jews "are still as devoted to Israel as they used to be," Hertzberg observes, "Indeed they are—but ever less intensely than in earlier years." Now, some polls have indeed indicated a decline in the intensity of American Jewish support for Israel, but not the one Hertzberg has looked at. He is characteristically prepared to affirm a decline solely on the evidence of his own conviction.

Although there are some lively manifestations of faith among American Jews (and not only in the ultra-Orthodox revival of the last decade or so), Hertzberg is correct in arguing that American Jewry is no longer a community of faith. Perhaps it never really was. Still, it is quite another thing to claim, as he does, that the partial displacement of religion by a more secular consciousness of peoplehood means the end of Jewish life. "Jews who cared about being Jewish knew," he intones, "if only in their bones, that they had to turn to religion." One detects here the inflection of the longtime rabbi, disillusioned by his ministry, despairing of the whole enterprise of modern Jewish existence because he can no longer hope for the resurgence of faith to which he has been exhorting.

And yet, ever since the late 18th century, quite apart from the special circumstances of America, a return to the secular realm has been one of the most powerful forces of Jewish history. It produced the German-Jewish scholarship known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, modern Hebrew literature, Yiddish literature, Zionism, and more than one variety of Jewish socialism, not to speak of a spectrum of Jewish communal, cultural, and service organizations, many of them still vigorous. Secular Jewish existence today is embattled in Israel, and it is always threatened with dilution or erosion in this country, but it is far from giving up the ghost. In fact, there are moments when one suspects that it is precisely what Jews need collectively to keep themselves sane. Surely there are options for Jews between the sharp alternatives of faith and assimilation. They are scarcely visible, however, from the pulpit perspective that dominates Hertzberg's dour depiction of American Jewish history.

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The Rhetorical Imagination

BY HILARY MANTEL

The Message to the Planet by Iris Murdoch

(Viking, 563 pp., $22.95)

In a shabby flat in North London, a group of intellectuals has gathered with the intention of singing a motet. Instead they fall to brooding about an absent friend, Marcus Vallar, infant mathematical prodigy, and latterly an acclaimed artist. Marcus seems to have vanished. What is he up to? "I wonder if he's still worrying about pure cognition," frowns one of the group. One speaks of Marcus as "a destroyer," another calls him merely "a cold fish." He may be in some mental hospital, perhaps "thinking he's Superman." (The general tenor of the conversation suggests that Marcus is more likely to have been reading Nietzsche than flying around in tights and a cape.) Wherever Marcus is, it is urgent to find him; Patrick, a drunken and impecunious Irish poet, is dying of a mysterious disease and believes that Marcus has put a curse on him.

So another great Iris Murdoch novel rolls over the horizon, with the impassive force of a natural disaster, predictable but unstoppable; and a trail of broken critics, as ineffectual as a picket fence in a hurricane, lies in its wake. The experience of reading Murdoch is a singular one. Her recent books are monstrously long. They become a way of life. The reader's dreams become filled with grand Wagnerian themes; he becomes preoccupied with subjects—freedom and necessity, good and evil—that he normally regards as the business of those who are paid to think about them. When Murdoch is at her best, her readers may be seized so thoroughly by her characters' obsessions that the claims of ordinary life dwindle and recede. One thinks particularly of *The Sea, The Sea* (1978), which it has become fashionable to denigrate. Perhaps the denigration is a form of self-defense, for the book's tarot-pack world of hangings and drownings, of epiphanies and malignancies, is both alarming and powerfully seductive.

Murdoch's most recent books—*The Philosopher's Pupil* (1983) and *The Book and the Brotherhood* (1987)—have been duller and have struck some commentators as self-indulgent, ill-planned, and otiose. (In Britain, though, they were best sellers.) For many people who do not care for a later generation of novelists, or who have grown too lazy to keep up, possession of the new hardback Murdoch is a mark of intellectual status. Despite the fecund cosmopolitanism of her thought, despite her fondness for characters who are foreign, exiled, or displaced, Murdoch does not alarm the English as other intellectuals do. With her broad, healthy, kindly face, her gray hair innocent of style, she seems the epitome of the market-town Englishwoman. She swims, we are told, in all weathers, and enjoys a drink; her private life is orderly. It all goes to prove that one can be a philosopher without being pale, peculiar, and Continental; and this consoles the Briton who takes the path to the bookshop.

It is possible that for the keen buyer of Murdoch's novels she provides a biennial brush with spiritual grandeur. Yet by most standards, she is a very bad writer. Her phrasing is often clumsy, her plots preposterous. Conventional descriptions of the English countryside alternate with pages of wildly improbable dialogue, studded with exclamation marks. Her characters never live and breathe, and though they constantly refer to the messiness of their lives, they seem insulated from any excess of messiness by their social standing, superior education, lucrative talents, or mysterious private incomes. "Horror" is something they experience readily, where others might feel concern; events they describe as "awful" might be seen by others as inconvenient.

There is also a besetting vagueness, which comes from a grand distaste for ephemera. When Murdoch wrote of Simone de Beauvoir's novel *The Mandarins*, she noted that it lacked the "traditional furniture" of the novel. Her own "furniture" never dates. Clothes are described with a mad imprecision, sums of money are left vague. A lively social dimension is missing. Yet it is not missed. Whatever the formal shortcomings, whatever the denial of the reader's needs, the Murdoch product has a sort of dogged magnificence.

The Message to the Planet brings together some familiar Murdoch types. There is Marcus, a Jew with a mysterious background, with his "honeyed" voice and a wife whom no one ever sees: "At 19 he discovered something called the Vallar Theorem which shook the mathematical world and interested astrophysicists." Then after a fallow period, "He amused himself by becoming a chess champion . . . was briefly fascinated by philosophy, but soon saw through it." There is Gildas Herne, a failed composer who lives in squalor, having become demoralized since he left the Anglican priesthood. He is not too demoralized to be a perky spokesman for "decent Western empiricism," but will later be smitten by the maguslike qualities of Marcus and pay homage on his knees to deeper and older traditions.

Another of the group is Jack Sheerwater, a successful painter and womanizer. Jack's wife, Franca—who has Italian blood and is prone to wear an "Ingres look"—has tolerated with dignity and kindness his many affairs, accepting Jack's assurance that variety is necessary for him and that she will always come first in his life. But Jack has fallen in love with Alison, a red-headed ex-ballerina from Edinburgh, and tells Franca he intends a permanent liaison with her. Shuttling between his own Chelsea house and Alison's flat proves too complicated, so in time Jack moves his mistress in beside his wife.

Franca continues her smiling acquiescence but cries a lot when she is alone, and wonders if she has the energy to leave Jack, or even to be indignant. She also wonders, intriguingly, if the worst punishment she could hand out to Jack and Alison is to collude with them, while silently hating them, over the course of a lifetime. Franca is the character who most engages the reader's sympathies. One feels relieved and reassured when she comes to the human conclusion: "If I had a machine gun I'd kill them." Jack, a loquacious egotist, holds to the cad's credo: "All would be well provided no one told lies." In a Murdoch novel, the characters are never left with their delusions unexamined.

Then there is Alfred Ludens, a young historian, who claims he has "no sense of identity," having tried to feel Jewish without success. In her first description of him, Murdoch tells us that

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he has "a mysterious speech impediment which troubles him at rare intervals"; in the next paragraph, that "he had an intermittent stammer." This is a clue to why *The Message to the Planet* is 563 pages long. Murdoch seems not to brook the interference of editors.

They seem an unpromising bunch, yet 20 pages into the book we have got a grasp of the complexity of these characters' lives, and of their thought; and a quiet, crackling black humor runs through every line. Ludens reveals to the group that he has in recent years visited Marcus, and that on his visit some nameless "horror" occurred. Later, in flashback, the "horror" is laid before us. On his visit, Ludens discovers that Marcus has a 14-year-old daughter called Irina. Irina, for no reason Ludens can discern, declares her love for him, then becomes hysterical. He tells her sharply to pull herself together, whereupon Marcus upbraids him in the following terms: "So, you were cruel to the tender child; you rejected her childish affection, you defiled it with your base vulgarity, you trampled upon her innocence, you worthless—" Terrified by this outburst, Ludens grabs his suitcase and runs all the way to the train station.

But back in London he engages in one of those perverse emotional shifts so frequent in Murdoch's characters, and feels "how much he loved Marcus Vallar." Since Patrick is in extremis, Ludens is prepared to hunt out Marcus again, and does in fact trace him to a cottage on a country estate in Suffolk. Irina believes her father has gone mad, but Ludens finds him much as usual: preoccupied, that is, with the nature of suffering and redemption, the centrality of Jewishness, and some ghastly universal secret, which, if discovered, might be fatal to the possessor. Ludens's immediate problem is that his car is out of action. This difficulty—which proves almost insuperable—is the pretext for Murdoch to bring a number of the other characters onto the rural scene. No one in a Murdoch novel subscribes to a national breakdown service; an innocent clumsiness carries the plot forward.

Marcus is enticed to London. He brings back Patrick from the brink of death. Later the possibility is raised that Patrick was dead already. However that may be, he is soon fit enough to drive the reader into a frenzy of irritation in his role as "poet, jester, teaser, charmer." When Marcus is tricked by his daughter into entering an up-market psychiatric hospital, Patrick goes along too, and takes up lodgings there. So does Ludens, who now wants to marry Irina, and who addresses her in the following terms: "I adore you, my gipsy angel, my dark enchantress, my sovereign lady."

Irina is the least successful of the lot. It is not that she is a cipher; they are all ciphers. It is that she exhibits no consistency from page to page. She is centerless, unresolved, and remains in the reader's imagination as she was on her first appearance, a graceless schoolgirl with greasy hair. Irina encapsulates in her person Murdoch's deepest deficiencies. The creator of Irina is utterly careless of any obligation to keep the reader with her, and perhaps touchingly unaware that interests may be faltering and credibility waning.

What is astonishing, though, is that these deficiencies take nothing from the core of the book, that they do not detract from its eventual success. Murdoch, through Marcus, explores the theme of the Holocaust, "a subject for grave meditation and the most scrupulous study for years to come." Marcus seems to Gildas Herne "a lost soul . . . sunk in the magic into which religion degenerates, what he wants is a spiritual power that has nothing to do with goodness. He wants to live forever. He probably will. He thinks he's God." To this Ludens replies, "No Jew can think he's God."

The argument develops: "We need, after the Holocaust, a God that is no god. We must adore emptiness and the experience of pain." For Marcus, the Holocaust signals "a parting of the ways"—it is a sign that either the destruction or redemption of mankind is at hand. Marcus believes in the Jews' redemptive mission: "Our ancient wisdom is stirred to speech." But Ludens will have none of it: "There is no God, and no purpose in history, and no punishments, and no Jewish or any other destiny. We just live in bottomless chaos and have to help each other, that's all." Murdoch sums up neatly the central difficulty of thinking about the Holocaust at all: "The spectacle of extreme cruelty appalls, it also fascinates, it may obscure the sin, which then acquires the dignity of a mystery." How can one penetrate the mystery without sharing the evil, releasing the evil within oneself, taking an excursion ticket to hell? Marcus finds he has "dark thoughts and evil yearnings, terrible images which move me to wickedness, as if to some obscure crime which perhaps I have committed already."

Now, none of this is particularly new. One would not turn to *The Message to the Planet* for intellectual excitement. But Murdoch's anxious, deracinated characters have a right to their preoccupations, since their identities are bound up with them. For all of Marcus's brilliance, the question of Jewishness still perplexes him. And by this stage in the book Murdoch has worn down the reader's resistance. When the characters engage in argument, we do not expect punchy realism. We expect rhetoric and melodrama; Murdoch's constant reader knows that when she has a grand theme in hand she sees no point in approaching it by irony and understatement. What seems overblown, portentous, and hackneyed in quotation can be acceptable, even moving, in context. In her essay "Against Dryness" (1961), Murdoch wrote, "I would connect eloquence with the attempt to speak the truth"—and the search for this old-fashioned "eloquence," undertaken on a heroic and sometimes disastrous scale, is the passion of Murdoch's writing life. Sheer persistence turns her failures into successes.

In the end it does not seem to matter that the characters, like the lilies of the field, toil not; nor that they never glance at the stockmarket prices, but are free to spend a summer attending on each other's caprices, driving around England looking at cathedrals and discovering little restaurants and attending madrigal concerts. They are shadows in the light of larger truths, and the search for these truths keeps the book alive when interest in its characters has expired and when, 100 pages from the end, every variety of cerebral anguish has been explored.

Marcus appears before the followers whom his miracles have attracted, "unconsciously undoing the buttons of his shirt, perhaps in an instinctive frenzy of bearing his breast." It is an image of terrible, triumphant resonance, an image of King Lear, an image of Christ, of all the stripped and shivering victims of the camps. Yet throughout the book Marcus is an ambiguous figure, as much charlatan as victim; like Lear, he arranges his own tragedy. His death, replete with carefully arranged symbols, is treated with a terrible sprightliness that no other author could contrive. Murdoch conjectures that "perhaps when distant people on other planets pick up some wave-length of ours all they hear is a continuous scream." Maybe so; but in Murdoch's universe they would also pick out a tiny far-off giggling.

HILARY MANTEL, film critic of the *Spectator*, is the author of four novels.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Crushed velvet

LAST WEEK'S OCCUPANT OF THIS space examined some meanings of Vaclav Havel's wonderfully suggestive phrase "The Velvet Revolution." Surely a reference to Miklos Haraszti's *The Velvet Prison* is intended, but I would trace another etymology through Havel's exposure to the cult band the Velvet Undergound. This meaning is suggested in part by Frank Zappa's recent visit to Hradcany Castle. Zappa is an unreconstructed survivor of the absurdist school in rock 'n' roll, which centered on his own band, the Mothers of Invention, as well as on Captain Beefheart, the Fugs, and the Velvets in the late 1960s. The movement's style persisted in Mitteleuropa long after it lost currency in America. Zappa and the Velvets were the primary influences on the formation in 1968 of an underground Czech group called the Plastic People of the Universe. This combo took its name from Zappa's song "Plastic People," perhaps also intending a nod in the direction of "The Exploding Plastic Inevitable," a roadshow Andy Warhol organized for the Velvet Underground. (Plastic and velvet appear to have been the subculture's essential textures.) Soon after Dubček fell, the Plastic People began their experiment in psychedelia with a Bohemian face. They sang Lou Reed's "Heroin" and "European Son." Their jagged, alienatory sound was filled out by Jiri Kabes's viola, in imitation of, or homage to, John Cale of the Velvets. The Plastic People were promptly proscribed, and managed to perform only clandestinely and sporadically through the early 1970s. In 1976 they were arrested and put on trial in Prague. Convicted of disturbing the peace, band members served prison terms varying in length from eight months to more than a year. Havel was one of those who petitioned for their release, saying the Plastic People were defending "life's intrinsic desire to express itself freely, in its own authentic and sovereign way." During the group's prison stay, Havel and Company founded Charter 77, the human rights organization that became the nucleus of the Czech opposition. After their release, the Plastic People performed and recorded at Havel's farmhouse. The playwright was apparently inspired by their kind of music: his most recent play, *Temptation*, a retelling of the Faust legend, calls for rock music of the "cosmic" or "astral" type to be played between scenes. In 1988 the Plastic People resurfaced as Pulnoc (Midnight) and toured the West with a husky-voiced vocalist named "Ticha," who sounded a lot like Nico, the West German cabaret singer who gigged with the Velvets. Now *Temptation* plays in Prague, Zappa shares a smoke with President Havel, and Pulnoc's members can perform "Femme Fatale" and "Sunday Morning" where they will. I can't swear Havel had all of this in mind when he uttered his line about the Velvet Revolution. But I for one will continue to think of it as the revolution that made Czechoslovakia safe for the Velvet Underground.

A FEW NIGHTS AGO I WAS AT home, peacefully writing NEW REPUBLIC articles at my desk, when a bat attacked me. It popped out of a crater in an exposed brick wall and strafed the place where I was sitting, clearing my head by only a few inches. My first instinct was to dive to the floor, which I did. My second was to shout for my housemate, who promptly appeared wielding a squash racket. A fellow urbanite, he had no better idea than I what to do about flying mammals, though he did remember that they sometimes have rabies. We tried to shoo it out an open window, but after a few more high-speed bombing missions, the bat found an inaccessible high corner and retired for the evening. Nothing would induce him back to his velvet prison, his fur-lined bat hole. In an attempt to noriega him, we blared Springsteen at his sanctuary. No luck. Bright lights were similarly unavailing. We considered classifying him as a pet, naming him Nicolae, and going to bed. This was not a serious option. Finally I thought to call my brother-in-law Garon, a mustachioed Marlin Perkins figure, who has always had a rapport with dangerous animals. I reached him by phone in San Francisco. "Can you see the bat?" he asked me. "Yeah," I said. "Fine. Put the bat on the phone. Throw the phone out the window." Funny guy, my brother-in-law. I thought he was still kidding when he told me to sneak up from behind and snatch it. He wasn't. Garon assured me he had handled dozens of bats and that there was really nothing to worry about. Terrified, but without alternative, I put on thick gloves, climbed up a file cabinet, and palmed the beast. As he squealed and squirmed in my hand, feelings of fear and disgust vanished. Pitching him out the window, I watched him stiffen his wings and take flight, like a bat back to hell.

A GLOSSY BROCHURE RECENTLY arrived in the mail from Reed Irvine's organization, Accuracy in Media, offering speakers on such topics as "Media Mischief and Misdeeds" and "Why the Media Are Biased." The pamphlet explains that Accuracy in Media is "a non-profit educational organization . . . dedicated to promoting accuracy and fairness in news reporting by the major media." In the interests of accuracy, it should be noted that Irvine's organization, which monitors the news for left-wing bias and writes complaining letters to editors, is right-wing. Nowhere does the pamphlet acknowledge this. AIM's sister organization, Accuracy in Academia, makes a similar pretense of monitoring professors for accuracy, while in fact vetting them for Marxist leanings. Imagine the outcry from AIM if the roles were reversed. If the Institute for Policy Studies billed itself as a "non-profit educational organization dedicated to the study of public policy," or if CBS repeated the description without explaining that IPS is a lefty outfit, Irvine would be the first to complain. Next time he does, someone should remind him that accuracy begins at home.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S UNPUNCtuable patois, so well parodied by Dana Carvey on "Saturday Night Live," yields gems with every utterance. Defending his China policy at a press conference a few weeks ago, he said: "And, you see, I think there's some real reasons—Asian reasons, if you will—Cambodia and Japan—that we should retain relations with China. . . . I tell you, one of the criticisms that gets to me a little, and I vowed—I didn't tell you my New Year's resolution was not to let it get to me—but it's the idea that I don't care about human rights." This is what Timothy Noah calls Bush's call-waiting mode: his tendency to abandon a thought in mid-sentence to accept another incoming mental message. But other times Bush just blunders around. In a recent interview with *Newsweek*, our goofy leader had this to say on the subject of the Moynihan tax cut proposal: "And I don't want to see this used to eventually—like real soon—raise taxes on the American people." And in defense of the Panama invasion: ". . . All those factors come together from a pure foreign-policy standpoint to help the understanding of others about what I did, proudly did, had to do." Confident as he is ungrammatical, Bush the orator seems more and more like a big, clumsy golden retriever, drooling and knocking over furniture in his eagerness to fetch his master's velvet slippers. Klutzy and good-natured, he makes up with enthusiasm what he lacks in syntactical grace. Hearing Bush speak, you can usually figure out what he's driving at. But on the printed page, he's a hard man to read.

JACOB WEISBERG

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